

THE CONSTANTINIAN BASILICA

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THE title "The Constantinian Basilica" is deceptively simple and general. But it seemed the best to choose for the paper when read at the symposium "The Age of Constantine," and I have kept it for publication as well. Its generic character implies that the discussion to some degree must remain summary and cannot concern itself in detail with questions regarding the date, the building history, or the reconstruction of individual buildings. The monuments are but few and known by and large only through scant remains or through contemporary and shortly later descriptions, often obscure. This evidence, archaeological and literary, could not well be incorporated in the text. It had to be relegated to footnotes, copious and at times lengthy. The buildings, as reconstructed from this evidence, could then be used to exemplify the problems of the Constantinian basilica. Likewise, the generic title was chosen so as to establish clearly that the discussion was not to be limited to basilicas built for Christian congregations. Obviously, such Christian basilicas play a significant part in the Age of Constantine, both in number, in the attention paid them by the Emperor, and in their impact to this very day on church planning in the West. But Christian basilicas under Constantine must not be seen in isolation. They want to be viewed within the framework of the *genus* basilica; and this *genus* comprises many more besides Christian basilicas. Lastly, the discussion of the *genus* must touch upon a number of complex questions which lurk behind the bland title: the place of the basilica within the frame of public building in Late Antiquity; the role of the emperor—and in particular the role of Constantine—and of other governmental and non-governmental bodies in financing and planning such building in general and basilicas in particular; the stylistic criteria and the architectural vocabulary appropriate for the various categories of private, public, and religious building; the differences between various types of basilicas, Christian and non-Christian; the variations within these subspecies and their causes, whether functional or social; and the stylistic elements characteristic either for all basilicas or for certain groups within the over-all *genus*. I am not sure that any of these questions can be answered at this point. But it ought to be possible to make a start.

No Constantinian basilica is better preserved than the one at Trier and few are more closely linked to Constantine.¹ Built between 305 and 312 while Constantine as Caesar resided in Trier, it was the great audience hall of the adjoining palace where the Emperor would sit in state to receive homage and dispense justice, the *sedes iustitiae*.² While the palace has disappeared, the

¹ W. v. Massow, *Die Basilika in Trier* (Simmern [Hunsrück], 1948); W. Reusch, "Die Aula Palatina in Trier," *Germania*, 33 (1955), 180ff.; *idem*, *Die Basilika in Trier* (Trier, 1956); *Frühchristliche Zeugnisse im Einzugsgebiet von Rhein und Mosel*, eds. Th. K. Kempf and W. Reusch (Trier, 1965), 144 ff. (henceforth quoted as Kempf-Reusch, *op. cit.*).

² The date of construction is ascertained by a coin of 305, found embedded in the mortar of one of the walls ("Jahresbericht des Rheinischen Landesmuseums Trier. Untersuchungen, Basilika," *Trierer*

basilica, though repaired, still stands to its full height of one hundred Roman feet (figs. 1, 2). A huge hall, two hundred feet long and one hundred wide from wall center to wall center, it is terminated by an apse but slightly raised above nave level, and plentifully lit by large windows: two tiers of nine each in either nave wall and two more tiers in the apse, each of four windows. A truss roof spanned the nave, another the apse, both possibly hidden by flat, coffered ceilings. The walls carried a marble revetment of many colors rising in successive tiers to the upper row of windows and articulated, it seems, by inlaid pilasters, panels, and friezes; above, there followed a zone of painted stucco or possibly mosaic; five niches in the apse wall bore ornamental glass mosaic; on the floor, pavement slabs of white and dark marble formed a geometric pattern.³ Only traces of all this splendor have been found—fragments of mosaic, pavement slabs, and revetment, iron clamps in the walls to fasten it, dowel holes, a few capitals of the inlaid pilasters. But wall decorations of Constantinian date in Rome, known from Renaissance drawings, are comparable to what must have existed at Trier. The apsed hall on the Roman Forum, later transformed into the Church of SS. Cosma e Damiano, but originally of Severan date, was redecorated, possibly under Constantine.⁴ Below the windows a marble revetment in two tiers, the upper one articulated by pilasters, geometric patterns, and friezes, covered the walls of nave and apse; while the lack of such incrustation in the window zone as shown in the drawing suggests a covering of mosaic or painted stucco (fig. 3). As at Trier, then, the interior was simple and filled with light; and the walls seemed but

Zeitschrift, 13 [1938], 240); by the identity of the brick stamps with those used in constructing the *castrum* at Deutz which an inscription dates 310 (Reusch, *Die Basilika in Trier*, 35); by the reference to a *sedes iustitiae*, recently completed, in the panegyric delivered before Constantine at Trier in 310 (*Panegyric VII*, 22, in *Panégyriques latins*, ed. E. Galletier, 2 [Paris, 1952], 73); and, possibly, by small fragments of a mosaic inscription on the arch of the apse, now lost but still read by R. Delbrück and dated by him 312 (H. Sedlmayr, *Spätantike Wandsysteme*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-histor. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, 1958, 7 [Munich, 1958], 14, quoting a letter by Th. K. Kempf).

³ The remains of the decoration of the walls and of the original pavement are extensively discussed and, though poorly, illustrated by Massow, *op. cit.*, 14ff.; see also Reusch, *Die Basilika in Trier*, 25f. and Kempf-Reusch, *op. cit.*, 148f.

The existence at Trier of a coffered ceiling remains conjectural, and it is possible that the trusses of the basilica were never concealed. But a coffered ceiling may well have existed: witness, the painted coffering of the palace hall, found below the twin cathedral (Kempf-Reusch, *op. cit.*, 240ff.); the coffering, likewise painted, from the south basilica of the cathedral (*ibid.*, 267ff.); finally, the repeated references to coffered ceilings in Constantinian churches contained in Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, for instance III. 32, 36 and IV. 58 (*Eusebius' Werke*, I, *Über das Leben Constantins*, ed. I. Heikel, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, 7 [Leipzig, 1902], 92f., 94, 141; henceforth quoted as Eusebius, V. C. [Heikel]).

⁴ The Severan hall on the Forum, now SS. Cosma e Damiano, used to be attributed to Constantine on the basis of an inscription supposedly read in the sixteenth century (*Corpus Inscr. Lat.*, 6, 1147). While the attribution of this inscription to the building has been recently doubted, rightly so in my opinion, a date in the first half of the fourth century nevertheless has been proposed by A. Frazer, *Four Late Antique Rotundas: Aspects of Fourth-Century Architectural Style in Rome*, Ph. D. thesis (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1964; unpublished), 110 ff., largely because of the pattern of this revetment. This pattern is transmitted by a drawing of Pirro Ligorio (*Vat. lat.* 3439, fol. 14; see also R. Krautheimer, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae*, I [Rome, 1937ff.], 141, fig. 85; henceforth quoted as *Corpus Basilicarum*), and its existence is confirmed by P. Ugonio, *Historia delle Stationi di Roma* (Rome, 1588), c. 178v: "... nei muri vi restano vestigij di incrostature di tavole grandi di marmo...."

a colorful membrane, sheathed by their revetment in marble, mosaic, and painted plaster. This light and fluid interior, certainly at Trier, seems to clash sharply with the massive exterior, articulated as it is by forceful blind arches, their piers originally crossed by wooden galleries. However, the contrast was not as stark as it seems at present. The brick surface of the walls, attractive to modern eyes, was coated with gray plaster; the window jambs were each decorated with a painted ornament.⁵ Nor did the mass of the building rise in quite the stark isolation in which it is seen today. Narrow courtyards, enveloped by porticoes, flanked the basilica on either side; a narthex extended in front, preceded by a forecourt.⁶ These enveloping structures obviously made the basilica appear still more powerful; but they also caused it to be seen not in isolation, but as the dominating element in a group of buildings.

A few years after the basilica in Trier had been completed and immediately after his conquest of Rome in October 312, Constantine built another basilica, adjoining the Lateran palace in Rome. Rather than being an audience hall, it was to serve the Christian bishop and his congregation as their cathedral. In function, then, at first glance, the two basilicas seem vastly different from each other. And in plan they differ, indeed, widely. The church at the Lateran, now S. Giovanni, begun in 312/313 and completed before 320, has been rebuilt time and again, last by Borromini, 1646–1651. But in plan and elevation Constantine's basilica can be reliably reconstructed (fig. 4).⁷ The nave, roughly three hundred Roman feet long, seventy feet wide, and one hundred feet high, was terminated by a semicircular apse and flanked by four aisles, two on either side. Its upper walls, lit by presumably large windows, were carried by high trabeated colonnades. The aisles, separated from each other by an arcade of short, green-speckled columns raised on pedestals, differed in length,

⁵ W. Reusch, "Die Aussengalerien der sogenannten Basilika in Trier," *Trierer Zeitschrift*, 18 (1949), 170ff. (see also *idem*, "Die Aula Palatina in Trier" [as *supra*, note 1], 192; *idem*, *Die Basilica in Trier*, 22f.) provides the evidence regarding the outside galleries and the finishing and decoration of the outer walls.

The assertion of late antiquity's esthetic enjoyment of the bare brick walls of its public buildings (G. Rodenwaldt, "Römische Staatsarchitektur," *Das Neue Bild der Antike*, 2, ed. H. Berve [Berlin, 1943], 356ff.), if at all tenable, must be thoroughly qualified.

⁶ The narthex and the flanking courtyards and porticoes are discussed in some detail in Kempf-Reusch, *op. cit.*, 147f.

⁷ The pre-Constantinian and Constantinian remains preserved below and incorporated in the walls of S. Giovanni in Laterano have been presented by E. Josi, *Scoperte nella Basilica Costantiniana al Laterano* (Rome, 1934); *idem*, "Scoperte nella Basilica Costantiniana al Laterano," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 11 (1934), 335ff.; A. M. Colini, *Storia e Topografia del Celio nell' antichità = Memorie Pont. Accad. Rom. di Archeologia*, 7 (Vatican City, 1944), 364ff.; E. Josi, R. Krautheimer and S. Corbett, "Note Lateranensi," *RACrist*, 33 (1957), 79ff., and 34 (1958), 59ff.; R. Krautheimer and S. Corbett, "The Constantinian Basilica of the Lateran," *Antiquity*, 34 (1960), 201ff.

However, the tentative reconstructions presented in the latter two papers as well as in R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Pelican History of Art (Harmondsworth, 1965), 25, fig. 8 (henceforth quoted as Krautheimer, *op. cit.*, 1965) require revision. A new reconstruction, which I hope will be final, is to appear in R. Krautheimer and S. Corbett, in collaboration with R. Malmstrom and R. H. Stapleford, "La Basilica Costantiniana al Laterano: Un tentativo di ricostruzione," *RACrist*, 41 (1965), which is in the press. It is based on the archeological evidence (foundation walls, remains of walls of the outer aisles and windows, fragment of spandrel of aisle arcade), on eye witness reports preceding Borromini's remodeling (entablature of nave colonnade), and on a new interpretation of the survey drawings prepared by and for Borromini (height of outer and inner aisle, level of nave windows, spacing and proportions of aisle arcades and of nave colonnades).

height and lighting: the inner ones, as long as the nave, rose over fifty feet high and were lit by semicircular windows, one above each arch of the separating arcade; the outer aisles, but thirty feet high and lit by only a few windows in the side walls, were much shorter, cut off by short, low wings projecting from the inner aisles—‘aisle transepts’ that may have served as sacristies. The outlines, then, are clear: the broken, stepped-up volumes of nave and aisles; the proportions, outside and inside; the interplay between the widely spaced, tall, and trabeated nave colonnades and the narrowly spaced, lighter, lower, and quicker arcades; even the gradation of light, from the dimly lit outer to the inner aisles and from there to the plentiful lighting of the nave. The decoration, on the other hand, can only be conjectured. The aisle arcade in both soffits and spandrels carried marble revetment,⁸ and likewise the vast surfaces of the nave walls below the window zone, thirty odd feet high, must have been designed for some kind of decoration. One is apt to think of a cycle with biblical scenes in wall painting or mosaic, like those once existing at St. Peter’s and S. Paolo fuori le mura and still extant at S. Maria Maggiore. Indeed, a biblical cycle did exist at the Lateran and was believed to be the original Constantinian decoration.⁹ But the cycles at St. Peter’s, S. Paolo, and S. Maria Maggiore date from the second third of the fifth century; and everything suggests that in the West, figural cycles on nave walls became customary sometime in the latter fourth century, but not before the middle.¹⁰ There is no trace of such decoration in any Roman church prior to 357, when the apse of St. Peter’s presumably received a mosaic with the *traditio legis*.¹¹ Hence it

⁸ Hooks for fastening the revetment were, and in part still are, preserved on the fragment of a spandrel of the aisle arcade found in 1934 (Josi, *Scoperte nella Basilica Costantiniana al Laterano*, fig. 2; *idem, op. cit.*, in *RACrist*, 11 [1934], 338, fig. 2; Josi-Krautheimer-Corbett, *op. cit.*, 1957, 83f.). Josi, *Scoperte*, 9, also noted the find of a batch of thin slabs of yellow marble, presumably from the revetment of the walls. The location of the find in the nave unfortunately does not prove that they belonged to a Constantinian revetment of the nave. Like the spandrel of the aisle arcade, the slabs lay in the fill spread to carry the pavement when it was relaid in the seventeenth century (Josi, *loc. cit.*).

⁹ Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Interpretatio Synodi VII Generalis* (787) (Migne, PL, 129, col. 289): *Constantinus Magnus ... aedificato ... templo Salvatoris Romae, in duabus parietibus templi historias veteres et novas designavit, hinc Adam de paradiſo exeuntem, et inde latronem in paradiſum intrantem...* J. Wilpert, “La decorazione costantiniana della Basilica Lateranense,” *RACrist*, 6 (1929), 53ff., believed the cycle to date back to Constantine.

¹⁰ The earliest references to such cycles in the West are well known. Paulinus of Nola, as late as 400–403, considered unusual his having depicted in the church of St. Felix an Old Testament cycle: *...pingere sanctas raro more domos...animantibus adsimulatis...* (*Carmen natale de S. Felice* [Carmen 27], vs. 543ff., in R. C. Goldschmidt, *Paulinus’ Churches at Nola* [Amsterdam, 1940], 62). Prudentius’ *Dittochaeon*, written at the same time, is composed of forty-nine *tituli* presumably reflecting a typological cycle of Old and New Testament scenes existing in a Roman church or else intended for such a cycle (in *Prudentius*, ed. H. J. Thomson, 2 [Loeb Classical Library, 1953], 346ff.). If not at that time, at least by the second third of the fifth century such cycles were commonplace in Rome. On the other hand, it is worth noting that none of Damasus’ many poems intimate the existence during his pontificate, 366–384, of such cycles in Roman churches.

¹¹ The apse mosaic at St. Peter’s probably was decorated with a *traditio legis* (J. Kollwitz, “Christus als Lehrer und die Gesetzesübergabe,” *Römische Quartalschrift*, 44 [1936], 45ff., esp. 62f.; T. Buddensieg, “Le coffret en ivoire de Pola, Saint Pierre et le Latran,” *Cahiers Arch.*, 10 [1959], 157ff., esp. 166ff.; C. Davis-Weyer, “Das Traditio-Legis-Bild und seine Nachfolge,” *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3. Folge, 12 [1961], 7ff., esp. 16). Since the inscription below mentioned an (unnamed) son of the founder Constantine, it has been connected sometimes with Constans II, who ruled the West 337–350 (J. H. Jongkees, *Studies on Old St. Peter’s*, *Archaeologica Traiectina*, 8 [Groningen, 1966], 29f.). More frequently it has been linked to Constantius II and thus dated 351–361 (E. Kirsch-

seems likely that the Lateran cycle also dated from the fifth century as did the figural mosaic of the apse, presumably donated in 428/429.¹² The earlier Constantinian apse decoration was apparently aniconic—*ex auro trimita*—gold foil in all likelihood.¹³ Thus it seems possible that the decoration of the nave as well was planned as an aniconic design: a geometrical pattern in marble revetment or painting, topped in the window zone by ornamental mosaic or painted plaster, and thus recalling the hall at SS. Cosma e Damiano or the basilica at Trier. Whether or not the walls on the outside were bare brick or covered with plaster remains a moot question. However, given the plaster revetment of the outer walls found at Trier and in Roman public monumental building in general, the possibility of plaster revetment also at the Lateran should at least be considered.¹⁴

Rather than the differences alone, the interplay of differences and resemblances between the basilicas at Trier and at the Lateran might be stressed; and this interplay prevails in the function as well as in the design of the two buildings. True, the Lateran basilica is a church and it served bishop and congregation for regular religious services. But at the same time, it was the throne hall both of Christ Basileus and of the bishop, His representative, just as the basilica at Trier was the seat of the Emperor's Divine Majesty, or, in his absence, the seat of his local representative.

Differences and resemblances between the basilica at Trier and that at the Lateran become understandable when viewed against the background of the architectural *genus* to which both belong. Discussions over these last thirty

baum, *The Tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul*, English trans. [New York, 1959], 152 f.) or, more precisely, after 354 (Buddensieg, *op. cit.*, 166). I would even suggest Constantius' visit to Rome in 357 as a likely date when work at St. Peter's, interrupted since 337 or shortly thereafter, was taken up again, including work on the apse mosaic and, indeed, the completion of the nave. In fact, the inscription once read on the arch of the apse (*in...arcu absidae super altare*; M. Vegio, *De Rebus antiquis... Basilicae S. Petri Romae*, I, chap. 1 [AA. SS. Junii 7, 1717, 62] and Jongkees, *op. cit.*, 31) must date from Constantine's reign. Thus, a mosaic decoration was begun in the apse, but it may well have been and probably was aniconic (see *infra*, note 13). Similarly, Constantine's inscription on the triumphal arch (*Quod duce te mundus...*, *ibid.*, no. 1752; the location *in arcu maiore ac triumphali...* is given unmistakably by M. Vegio, *loc. cit.*) was not, in my opinion, originally accompanied by a figural composition. The one supposedly seen in the sixteenth century, showing Constantine offering the church to Saint Peter (Jongkees, *op. cit.*, 14), was probably of Carolingian date—if indeed it ever existed.

¹² Buddensieg, *op. cit.*, 180.

¹³ *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne (Paris, 1886–92) (henceforth quoted as *L. P.*), 1, 172. The meaning of *trimita* remains somewhat in doubt. Its original significance, a triplewoven cloth (Ch. Du Cange, *Glossarium...*, s.v. *trimma*; see also *ibid.*, s. v. *trimitum*, and Duchesne's remarks, *L. P.*, 1, 191, note 32), leads one to interpret it so as to mean gold foil, perhaps in a triple layer. Similarly, the apse vault of St. Peter's, according to the donation list (*L. P.*, 1, 176), is described as *ex trimma auri fulgentem*.

¹⁴ The variety of functions assigned to the Roman basilica is best attested to by the epithets linked to the term, as listed s.v. *basilica* in *Thesaurus linguae latinae*, 2 (Leipzig, 1900), col. 1761 ff. The variety in planning is illustrated by L. Crema, *L'architettura romana = Encyclopedia classica*, Sezione III, vol. 12, tomo 1 (Turin, 1959), *passim*. Within the context of the origins of the Early Christian basilica the entire problem of the basilica has been discussed by myself in "The Beginnings of Early Christian Architecture," *The Review of Religion*, 3 (1939), 127 ff.; by the discussions at a symposium, "Die Ursprünge der christlichen Basilika," held in Munich in 1951 (*Kunstchronik*, 4 [1951], 97 ff.); by J. B. Ward Perkins, "Constantine and the Origins of the Christian Basilica," *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 22 (1954), 69 ff. (henceforth quoted as Ward Perkins, *op. cit.*, 1954); and by E. Langlotz, in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 1 (Stuttgart, 1950), 1225 ff.

years have clarified the original function of the *genus* basilica: a hall designed for large gatherings—of the township; for markets; for judiciary sessions; for military drill; as lobbies adjoining theaters, thermae, and temples; finally, as early as Vitruvius' time, as reception halls in the houses of the wealthy and consequently, soon, as throne rooms in imperial palaces. As varied as these functions were the plans: single-naved halls with or without apses; halls with two naves; halls composed of a nave and aisles, the latter parallel to or enveloping the nave on four sides: broad and short, or very long structures (figs. 5, 6). Entrances are placed on one of the long sides, thus intimating a transversal or central reading of the plan; or they are placed on one short side, on the longitudinal axis, or indeed, on both one long and one short side. The tribunal for the presiding magistrate may project into the nave or an aisle; or apses sheltering tribunals may extend outward from one, two, or three flanks of the building. Nave and aisles may be of one height; or the nave may be higher and provided with clerestory windows, small or large. Also, the aisles may or may not be surmounted by galleries. All these variations were fully developed by the first and second centuries A.D.; and the only feature the overwhelming majority of basilicas seem to have had in common was the timber roofing in all its parts and the presence of at least one tribunal, free-standing or contained by an apse. The variations, unless determined simply by local conditions such as adjoining streets, were apparently linked either to the specific function or to regional custom. Private and palace basilicas in wealthy houses and in imperial residences—the audience hall in Domitian's *Domus Flavia* on the Palatine or the second-century basilica found below Constantine's basilica at Trier—were as a rule single-naved halls terminated by an apse, the walls articulated by rows of freestanding or semi-engaged columns.¹⁵ On the other hand, an over-long plan, closely related to *stoas* and open along one side, appears to prevail among forum basilicas in the Hellenistic East, as witness the basilica at Izmir;¹⁶ while a short broad plan may be characteristic for basilicas in the West, in particular in Italy.¹⁷

¹⁵ G. Lugli, *Roma Antica, Il centro monumentale* (Rome, 1946), 486 ff., and E. Nash, *Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 1 (London, 1961–1962), 316, with bibliography. The columns rose close to the side walls, at a distance of but 1.50 m. Hence, Crema, *op. cit.*, 316 and fig. 365, following G. Giovanonni, "La Basilica dei Flavi sul Palatino," *Atti III Convegno di Storia dell' architettura* (Rome, 1940), 85 ff., convincingly reconstructs a barrel vault carried by the walls and the columns instead of the older reconstruction with flat ceiling (e.g., Lugli, *op. cit.*, 487, fig. 144). A. v. Gerkan (*Kunstchronik*, 4 [1951], 115) views the building as having originated in three successive stages, the last Christian. But I see no evidence for this.

Of the second-century basilica in Trier, possibly the reception hall of the Roman governor, only the foundation walls are known (W. Reusch, "Die Aula Palatina in Trier" [as *supra*, note 1], 194 and report in *Bull. Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* [1954–1955], 128 f.), but the short spur walls projecting inward from the flanks of the hall must have carried freestanding or possibly engaged columns comparable to those in Domitian's basilica.

¹⁶ R. Naumann and S. Kantar, "Die Agora von Smyrna," *Istanbuler Forschungen*, 17 (1950), 69 ff.; see also the basilicas at Beyrouth (J. Lauffray, "Forums et monuments de Beryte," *Bull. du Musée de Beyrouth*, 7 [1944–1945], 35 ff.); at Cyrene (J. B. Ward Perkins and M. H. Ballance, "The Caesareum at Cyrene," *PBSR*, 26 [1958], 137 ff., esp. 149 ff.); at Cremona (*ibid.*, 167 ff.); and at Aspendos (K. Lanckoroński and G. Niemann, *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens* [Vienna, 1890–1892], 96 ff.).

¹⁷ Ward Perkins, *op. cit.*, 1954, 76 f., and Ward Perkins and Ballance, *op. cit.*, bring out the contrast of the Hellenistic long-stoa basilica and the short, broad type, the origins of which Ward Perkins sees in Italy; but the latter is not infrequent in the Eastern provinces either.

Roman antiquity thought in terms of a hierarchy of architectural categories and sub-categories. Primarily, these *genera* were determined by the function of the building. But they each also carried their appropriate plan, vocabulary, and stylistic concept: temples and funerary buildings; domestic architecture—from the highest class of private mansions to apartment houses and farm buildings; public architecture—from monumental thermae, curiae, and imperial palaces to utilitarian warehouses and barracks. Basilicas, whatever their specific function, belonged chiefly to this public realm. But their position and hence their vocabulary were more flexible than in most other categories. On the one hand, basilicas approached purely utilitarian building and partook of its unadorned design. On the other hand, public basilicas of prominence in Rome or in large provincial cities, and throne rooms in imperial palaces necessarily reflected the splendor of the Empire and its divine ruler; as a tool of political-architectural propaganda, they were thus close to the realm of the State religion and, like other *genera* of public buildings, such as thermae, shared the architectural vocabulary of the temples of the old gods and of the *sacrum palatum*: colonnaded orders, entablatures, stone masonry (genuine or imitated in stucco), vaulting or coffered ceilings. However, while religious building and its dependent categories remained remarkably conservative, the basilica retained its flexibility; and by A.D. 300 it went through a phase of break-up and revitalization.

The change was long prepared, both in function and in plan. Any civic basilica carried religious connotations coupled with its ordinary functions. Law was dispensed and business deals legally concluded before the effigy of the emperor's divine genius—its natural place being one of the apses of the basilica.¹⁸ Even thermae basilicas sheltered his statue or that of some other divinity.¹⁹ The throne room, where the divine majesty revealed himself in the flesh, was *eo ipso* religious ground.²⁰ Quite consistently the Talmud forbids Jewish masons to work on a basilica, whether "for heathen kings, for thermae, for a market."²¹ Eventually the *genus* itself was transferred to religious building, that is, beyond the pale of the Establishment. The synagogue at Alexandria, destroyed in A.D. 116, is described as a huge basilica with double aisles

¹⁸ Krautheimer, "The Beginnings of Early Christian Architecture" (as *supra*, note 14), 142f. Passages in support of the thesis are, of course, far more numerous than I knew then. I mention only Severian of Gabala's statement (as quoted by K. Setton, *Christian Attitude towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century* [New York, 1941], 196) that "it is necessary to set up the statue of the emperor in law-courts, market-places, public assemblies, and theaters . . .," and similarly a passage in the Talmud (Abodah Zarah, 16b) where Jews are forbidden to build with the heathens "...a basilica [if to be used as] a *gradum* (Law court?), a stadium and a *bema*. But it is permitted to build with them *dimisiot* (state buildings?) and public baths. As soon (however) as they reach the arch where they place an idol, they must cease to build." (H. L. Gordon, "The Basilica and the Stoa in Rabbinical Literature," *Art Bulletin*, 13 [1932], 353ff., esp. 362f.)

¹⁹ Augustine, *Ep. XLVI, quaestio 15*: *Si christianus debet in balneis lavare vel in thermis, in quibus sacrificatur simulacris . . .* (Migne, PL, 33, col. 183).

²⁰ Suffice it to refer to A. Alföldi's still basic papers, "Die Ausgestaltung des monarchischen Zeremoniells am römischen Kaiserhofe," *Röm. Mitt.*, 49 (1934), 1ff., and "Insignien und Tracht der römischen Kaiser," *Röm. Mitt.*, 50 (1935), 1ff.

²¹ Gordon, *op. cit.*, 362: "...there are three [kinds of] basilicas, for heathen kings, for baths, for treasuries . . ."—this latter explained as warehouses or public markets.

and galleries.²² Third-century synagogues in Galilee were built with aisles, frequently surmounted by galleries, on three sides of the nave.²³ Mystery cults and funerary collegia ever since the first century had evolved new variants: small, single-naved or composed of three naves and vaulted; at other times timber-roofed, but always terminated by an apse—witness, the basilica of Julius Piso at Makhtar, the *basilica sotterranea* at Porta Maggiore in Rome of the first century A.D., and the temple of the Matronae at Pesch near Trier, dating as late as A.D. 330.²⁴

By the turn of the third to the fourth century, the renewal of the *genus* was complete. The presence of the emperor, in effigy or in the flesh, had become increasingly the predominant element in any basilica. Under the impact of the emperor cult, the borderlines between religious and secular, civic, judiciary, and throne basilicas had been obliterated; and any basilica was, or carried the connotations of, a sanctuary of the god on earth. At the same time, the traditional basilica types became obsolete. The architects of Maxentius when laying out his *Basilica Nova* attempted to revitalize the *genus* by adopting a plan heretofore customary in thermae:²⁵ a hall flanked on either side by three barrel-vaulted niches and covered by three huge groin vaults seemingly resting on powerful columns. However, this thermae plan was modified by changing its axis to a longitudinal one: a narthex preceded the east end, adjoining the Temple of Venus and Roma as rebuilt by Maxentius, while the opposite end was occupied by an apse which, since 313, sheltered the colossal statue of Constantine.²⁶ However, the *Basilica Nova* remained a *hapax legomenon*. The

²² The Alexandria synagogue is known only from a passage in the Talmud (Yer. Sukka, V, 1, 55^{ab}; Bab. 51^b): a “diplostoön...like a great basilica, having one stoa within another stoa...” and provided with galleries for the women (S. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertümmer* [Berlin-Vienna, 1922], 261f.; E. L. Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of El-Hamme* [Jerusalem, 1935], 72; Gordon, *op. cit.*, 360f.). But one of the passages was composed seventy, the other 150 years after the destruction of the building and may well contain or indeed be compiled entirely from features drawn from second- and third-century synagogues in Galilee; see the following note.

²³ H. Kohl and C. Watzinger, *Antike Synagogen in Galiläa* (Leipzig, 1916), and, more recently, E. L. Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece* (London, 1934). The third-century date suggested by Kohl and Watzinger, *op. cit.*, has occasionally been doubted (A. M. Schneider, *Kunstchronik*, 4 [1951], 115); but M. Avi-Yonah kindly confirms my opinion that they certainly are of pre-Constantinian date; see also M. Avi-Yonah, *Geschichte der Juden im Zeitalter des Talmud* (Berlin, 1962), 76.

The presence of galleries is ascertained by finds of smaller columns or of a staircase in five or six of the Galilean synagogues (Sukenik, *The Ancient Synagogue of El-Hamme*, 72).

²⁴ The basilica at Makhtar, erected in A.D. 93 by the *iuvenes* of the town for the assemblies of their *collegia*, about A.D. 200 was transformed into a funerary basilica (Ch.-G. Picard, “La basilique funéraire de Julius Piso à Mactar,” *Comptes-Rendus Acad. Inscr. et Belles-Lettres* [1945], 185ff., and *idem*, *Civitas Mactaritana* [Paris, 1957], 96ff.). For the basilica at Porta Maggiore, certainly built for a mystery cult, whether Neo-Pythagorean or not (J. Carcopino, *La basilique pythagoricienne de la Porte Majeure* [Paris, 1926]), see Nash, *op. cit.*, 1, 169ff. The temple at Pesch is discussed by H. Lehner, “Der Tempelbezirk der Matronae Vacallinehae bei Pesch,” *Bonner Jahrbücher*, 125 (1919), 74ff.; but it should be noted that the reconstruction with clerestory, generally accepted, is by no means certain (*ibid.*, 148ff.).

²⁵ Frazer, *op. cit.*, 188ff., has discussed the departure from the traditional basilica type in the *Basilica Nova* and its possible reasons.

²⁶ The best summary of the building history of the *Basilica Nova* and the most thorough description of its design, including the revetment of the interior with marble and painted plaster, of the exterior with stucco imitating stone masonry, are still found in the monograph of A. Minoprio, “A Restoration of the Basilica of Constantine,” *PBSR*, 12 (1932), 1ff. The placing of Constantine’s colossal statue in the apse at the short west end of the nave (H. Kähler, “Konstantin 313,” *Jahrbuch*

predominant basilica type by 300–320 was a single-naved structure, timber-roofed or with a flat ceiling, preceded by a narthex and terminated by an apse; and it was strictly longitudinal. Developed in wealthy domestic architecture among reception halls and throne rooms, the plan remained customary in palaces of the emperor and his representatives and in lavish houses and villas.²⁷ The basilica at Piazza Armerina is one example; the reception hall in the Sessorian Palace in Rome, the so-called "Templum Veneris et Cupidinis," (fig. 7) is another, and both date from 300 or slightly later.²⁸ By then, however, the type spread beyond the confines of private and palace basilicas. This is but natural. The emperor and everything pertaining to him, his palace and throne room in particular, progressively were considered ever more sacred. At the same time all monumental public architecture, and thus basilicas whatever their specific function, were viewed increasingly as the responsibility as well as the property of the emperor.²⁹ Thus, the single-naved, apsed basilica became

des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, 67 [1952], 1 ff.) has been definitely established, on the basis of a fifteenth-century drawing, by T. Buddensieg, "Die Konstantinsbasilika in einer Zeichnung Francesco di Giorgio und der Marmorkoloss Konstantins des Grossen," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 13 (1962), 37 ff.

The shift from the original longitudinal to a short transversal axis, effected about 320 when the apse to the north and the porch to the south were added, was intended primarily to replace the original Maxentius grouping of the Basilica and the Temple of Venus and Roma by a new focus provided by the Via Sacra and the imperial palaces on the Palatine; see Frazer, *op. cit.*, 192 f.

²⁷ Ward Perkins, *op. cit.*, 1954, 75 f., as well stresses the longitudinal element prevailing in palace basilicas. But while I see them primarily as single-naved, he inclines to view them "under the early Empire, at any rate, [as] longitudinally colonnaded halls (italics mine), with clerestory lighting and an apse at one end of the long axis," quoting as examples Domitian's basilica on the Palatine and the one in Hadrian's villa.

²⁸ The date of construction of Piazza Armerina, formerly assigned to the years 306–312 and interpreted as a villa of Maximianus Herculeus (G. V. Gentili, *La villa imperiale di Piazza Armerina* [Rome, 1954]; H. P. L'Orange, "Il Palazzo di Massimiano Erculeo di Piazza Armerina," *Studi in onore di A. Calderini e R. Paribeni*, 3 [Milan, 1956], 593 ff.; *idem*, "Nuovo contributo allo studio del Palazzo Erculio di Piazza Armerina," *Institutum Romanum Norvegiae, Acta*, 2 [1965], 65 ff.; I. Lavin, "Antioch Hunting Mosaics and their Sources," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 [1963], 179 ff., esp. 244 ff.), is again under discussion, and recent proposals suggest a succession of building operations and periods of decoration extending from 310 to as late as 360–370 (G. Lugli, "Contributo alla storia edilizia della villa romana di Piazza Armerina," *Riv. Ist. naz. d'Archeologia e Storia dell'arte*, 11–12 [1963], 28 ff.; A. Carandini, *Ricerche sullo stile e la cronologia dei mosaici della villa di Piazza Armerina = Studi miscellanei*, 7, Seminario di Archeologia e Storia dell'arte greca e romana dell'Università di Roma, 1961–1962 [Rome, 1964]; J. W. Salomonson, *La mosaique aux chevaux de l'antiquarium de Carthage*, Archeologische Studien van het Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome, 1 [The Hague, 1965], 20 f.), or indeed a fifth-century date (M. Cagiano de Azevedo, "I proprietari della villa di Piazza Armerina," *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Mario Salmi* [Rome, 1961], 18 ff.; *idem*, "I cosiddetti tetrarchi di Venezia," *Commentari*, 13 [1962], 160 ff.). Nevertheless, with L'Orange and Lavin, I incline toward an early fourth-century date, certainly for the construction of the basilica.

A date of construction under Maxentius, first suggested by G. T. Rivoira, *Architettura romana* (Milan, 1921), 185, for the apsed hall in the Sessorian Palace has again been proposed, though not too emphatically, by A. M. Colini, "Horti Spei Veteris, Palatium Sessorianum," *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, Memorie*, 8.3 (1955), 137 ff., esp. 164 ff.—the first thorough study of the building.

Other examples of such single-naved apsed audience halls of fourth-century date are found on Luka Tolače near the Yugoslav coast (E. Dyggve, "Intorno al palazzo sull' isola di Meleda," *Palladio*, N.S., 9 [1959], 19 ff.) and at Metz (W. Reusch and H. Mylius, "Zur Frage der römischen Apsiden-Grossbauten im Moselraum," *Trierer Zeitschrift*, 18 [1949], 194 ff.; W. Reusch, "Die Basilika St. Pierre-aux-Nonnains in Metz...," *Neue Ausgrabungen im Nahen Osten, Mittelmeerraum und in Deutschland, Tagung der Koldewey-Gesellschaft*...1959 [Bonn, 1959 ?], 25 ff.).

²⁹ R. MacMullen, "Roman Imperial Building in the Provinces," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 64 (1959), 207 ff.

the favorite type for all kinds of basilicas—at least in the Western part of the Empire. In the course of the fourth century it apparently took over wholesale the realm of the civic, and in part that of the religious, basilica: witness the apsed hall on the Roman Forum, now SS. Cosma e Damiano; the Basilica of Junius Bassus, about A.D. 330, a reception hall though hardly private and presumably endowed with religious connotations;³⁰ lastly, two civic basilicas at Djémila dating from 360–367.³¹

Constantine's basilica in Trier represents the type to perfection both in function and design. It was the Seat of Justice Incarnate, ground hallowed by the presence of the Divine Majesty as Law-Giver. It was attached to the palace, yet separate from it. Its plan is clear and simple, the interior is unified, the light plentiful. The walls shone with marble revetment, painted plaster, and mosaic in many colors, into which flat pilasters and friezes, the residuals of a classical vocabulary, had been woven as a mere inlay. This emphasis on light and on a colorful treatment of the walls the basilica at Trier shares with the contemporary or slightly later single-naved basilicas: the one at Piazza Armerina, the Basilica of Junius Bassus, the hall of SS. Cosma e Damiano, the one in the Sessorian Palace.³² It is a concept of architectural design, developed in, and for a long time confined to, the realm of domestic interiors; and it contrasts sharply with the traditions which had dominated public monumental building in the Roman world through the third century. Whether

³⁰ Chr. Hülsen, "Die Basilica des Junius Bassus . . .," *Festschrift für Julius Schlosser* (Vienna, 1927), 53 ff.; G. Lugli and Th. Ashby, "La basilica di Junio Basso sull' Esquilino," *RACrist*, 9 (1932), 221 ff. The building is known best through the numerous sixteenth-century surveys showing the elevation of the walls and their marble revetment (Hülsen, and Lugli and Ashby, *op. cit.*, *passim*). The suggestion of religious connotations implied by the subject matter of this decoration was proposed in conversations by G. Becatti, who is working on the problem in connection with his study of the marble-revetted "loggia" near Porta Marina at Ostia. The date of the basilica, based on the inscription of an ex-consul Junius Bassus, is in doubt since there were two consuls of that name, holding office in 317 and 331 respectively. Lugli and Ashby, *op. cit.*, 223 f., inclined toward the second Junius Bassus (who died in 359) and thus toward a date of construction between 331 and 359. I accepted that date (*Corpus Basilicarum*, I, 62), but I begin to wonder whether the attribution to the first Junius Bassus and hence a building date about 320 are not preferable.

³¹ P.-A. Février, "Notes sur le développement urbain en Afrique du Nord . . .," *Cahiers Arch.*, 14 (1964), 1 ff., esp. 12 ff. Similarly, to Augustine basilicas normally were longitudinal: . . . *lateribus longioribus brevioribus frontibus, sicut pleraeque basilicae . . .* (*Quaestiones in heptateuchum*, II, *quaestio 182*; Migne, PL, 34, col. 660). A remark by Palladius, *Opus agriculturae*, I, 18, 1 (ed. J. C. Schmitt [Leipzig, 1898], p. 21), may likewise refer to the longitudinal plan of a basilica; or else, it may refer only to the raised tribunal of a secular basilica, regardless of the plan: *ut (scil. a wine cellar) basilicae ipsius forma calcitorium habeat loco altiore*.

³² Interiors filled with plentiful light and enclosed by plain walls shining with marble and mosaic have frequently been claimed as principal features of late antique building in general (e.g., Sedlmayr, *op. cit.* [as *supra*, note 2], 6 and 16 f.) or of Constantinian church building in particular (e.g., A. Riegl, "Zur Entstehung der altchristlichen Basilika," *Gesammelte Aufsätze* [Augsburg, 1929], 91 ff.). To me, these elements seem to characterize not so much late antique architecture as a whole or Christian basilicas specifically, but rather the over-all category *basilica* and within it a variant predominant in the West by A.D. 300.

Indeed, large windows in the apse or in the side walls of such halls and marble revetment unarticulated by columns and entablatures are ascertained in the West at Piazza Armerina (R. Günter, *Wand, Fenster und Licht in der spätantik-frühchristlichen Architektur* [Munich, 1965], part I, 71, note 2); in the Junius Bassus basilica (*supra*, note 30; see also G. Ciampini, *Vetera Monimenta*, I [Rome, 1690], 4 and pl. I); in the hall of SS. Cosma e Damiano (*supra*, note 4); and in the apsed hall in the Sessorium (*supra*, note 28), where also stucco ornament was seen still in the sixteenth century (" . . . con belli ornamenti di pietre e stucchi . . ."); Colini, *op. cit.* (as *supra*, note 28), 166, quoting L. Fauno, *Delle antichità della città di Roma* [Venice, 1552], c. 100 v). But they are so far unknown in the East.

in temples, curiae, or thermae, interiors were articulated by colonnades, free-standing or projecting from the walls, by entablatures, by niches, and more often than not, by vaulting. Even in basilicas, colonnades, entablatures, and other elements of the traditional classical vocabulary are the rule; and in palace basilicas, in the first century at any rate, vaulting was not considered out of place: witness Domitian's audience hall. Windows, where they existed, were small, the interiors dark.

After 300, such interior spaces, articulated by traditional classical members, are retained only by the more conservative architectural *genera*: the temple of Venus and Roma, in Maxentius' rebuilding; the Baths of Diocletian and those of Constantine in Rome; Maxentius' *Basilica Nova*. The marble revetment on the walls and piers, the painted plaster in the window zone of the *Nova*, serve as a mere backdrop for the traditional articulation by columns, projecting entablatures, coffered vaults. In categories of building less tradition-bound, this articulation by classical membering gives way to a design focussed on unified simple space, abundant light, and the colorful membranes of the walls. In Constantine's age the concept apparently dominated all upper class domestic building. From there it may have spread, at any rate in the western parts of the Empire, to the category of public building most closely linked to the Emperor—basilicas of any kind. Whether or not it ever penetrated the domains of public architecture in the eastern provinces had better be left open at this point. But this is the background against which the Constantinian basilica must be viewed, whether it served as audience hall, forum basilica, or church.

Indeed, Constantinian church building becomes understandable only within the context of this renewal of the *genus* basilica in both function and design and its dominant place in public monumental architecture.³³ Constantine was raising the Church from obscurity and persecution to the highest rank within his scheme of the Empire and of the universe; hence its buildings must fall into the sphere of public, and, where possible, monumental architecture. Only

³³ An excellent survey of the innumerable hypotheses regarding the origins of the Christian basilica proffered since the fifteenth century was compiled some years ago by N. Duval, "Les origines de la basilique chrétienne," *L'Information d'histoire de l'art*, 7 (1962), 1 ff. Outstanding among recent studies of the problem are the discussions and papers presented at the Munich symposium summarized in *Kunstchronik*, 4 (1951), 97ff., especially the contributions of A. Grabar ("La basilique chrétienne et les thèmes de l'architecture sacrale dans l'antiquité," *ibid.*, 98ff.) and of F. W. Deichmann ("Entstehung der Basilika und Entstehung des Kirchengebäudes," *ibid.*, 113f.).

Regarding my own paper ("The Beginnings of Early Christian Architecture," as quoted *supra*, note 14) and Ward Perkins' essay on the origin of the Christian basilica (*op. cit.*, 1954), it seems to me in retrospect that both our opinions are in need of revision. My paper overemphasizes the impact on the formation of the Christian basilica of the forum basilica and its religious connotations. Ward Perkins, on the other hand, focuses too exclusively, I feel, on a direct derivation of Christian basilicas from imperial audience halls, which he views not only as longitudinal but, by implication, as frequently composed of a nave and aisles. While one of the reception halls at Spalato presumably had this plan (Ward Perkins, *ibid.*, 76; also N. Duval, "Le Palais de Dioclétien à Spalato à la lumière des récentes découvertes," *Bull. Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* [1961], 76 ff., esp. 106ff.), the type among reception halls is so far unique, since the passages between columns and walls in Domitian's basilica, but 1.50 m. wide, cannot in my opinion be interpreted as aisles. My own present position regarding the origin of the Christian basilica under Constantine is laid down in *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (*supra*, note 7), 19ff.: I think no longer in terms of one single source, whether forum basilicas or palace basilicas, for the origins of the Christian basilica, but view it as a new creation within a *genus* long established and about A.D. 300 in a process of renewal.

churches in a provincial backwater or built by a poor congregation might adopt plans common among low-class secular basilicas: halls with a single nave or with three naves of equal height, such as S. Crisogono in Rome or the cathedral in Aquileia;³⁴ or they might cling to the tradition of domestic architecture. Churches higher up on the social ladder, and especially those founded by the Emperor, must be prominent, large, and resplendent with precious materials and decoration. As a public building, the cathedral of Rome at the Lateran occupied the site of a former army barracks; its maintenance was secured from real estate ceded from the imperial fiscus; it bore the name of the imperial founder, Basilica Constantiniana, as did the Basilica Ulpia; it was laid out on a large scale and provided with precious furnishings; and the adjoining imperial palace was ceded to the Roman bishop as his residence. The policy thus initiated in 312/313 was apparently established both *de facto* and *de iure* by the last decade of Constantine's reign.³⁵ His letter to Bishop Makarios of Jerusalem in 325/326 formulates it *expressis verbis*: the church on Golgotha was to be built at public expense, to be shared between the provincial government and the Imperial Treasury; and it was "to outshine the finest buildings in any city and to be more beautiful than any basilica anywhere"—thus assigning it to the domain of public monumental building and within it, that of basilicas.³⁶ Public building, of course, for centuries had been a primary responsibility of the emperors, financed and supervised by their representatives and a powerful instrument of imperial policy and propaganda.³⁷ Constantine merely expands this principle to include church building. But the expansion is decisive, and church building soon becomes the foremost of the Emperor's activities in the domain of public monumental building. The letter to Makarios may well have been composed by the Christian desk in the imperial chancellery. But the policy it represents is Constantine's own: it is he, after all, who impatiently urges the Bishop twice to report right away and to him in person.³⁸ Even where he is not so personally involved as in the foundation of the church of Golgotha, for example in the construction of the *basilica ecclesiae* in a small North African town, he orders it to be built on public ground and at public expense.³⁹

³⁴ For S. Crisogono in Rome, see *Corpus Basilicarum*, I, 144; for Aquileia, most recently S. Corbett, "A Note on the Arrangement of the Early Christian Buildings at Aquileia," *RACrist*, 32 (1956), 99 ff., and M. Mirabella Roberti, "Considerazioni sulle aule teodoriane di Aquileia," *Studi aquileiesi* (Aquileia, 1953), 209 ff. Imperial participation in the construction or decoration of Aquileia cathedral has been suggested by H. Kähler, *Die spätantiken Bauten unter dem Dom von Aquileia* (Saarbrücken, 1957), but I remain unconvinced.

³⁵ For Constantine's policy with regard to church buildings, see R. Krautheimer, "Constantine's Church Foundations," *Acts VII International Congress for Christian Archaeology* (in the press).

³⁶ Eusebius, *V. C.*, III, 30ff. (Heikel, 91 ff.).

³⁷ MacMullen, *op. cit.* (as *supra*, note 29).

³⁸ H. Dörries, *Das Selbstzeugnis Kaiser Konstantins*, Akad. d. Wissensch. in Göttingen, Philol.-hist. Klasse, Abhandl. 3, 34 (Göttingen, 1954), 85.

³⁹ In Optatus Milevitanus, *De schismate Donatistarum*, Appendix, X, (ed. C. Ziwsa, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 26 [Vienna, 1893], 215): *litteras dedi ut domum bonorum nostrorum transgredi faciat...ad dominium ecclesiae catholicae.... In quo...loco sumptu fiscali basilicam erigi praecepi....* Similarly Eusebius, *V. C.*, III, 1 (Heikel, 76f.), regarding the construction of churches "at the expense of the Imperial Treasury."

Like all of antiquity before, the fourth century clings to architectural categories and the appropriate vocabularies. Constantine or his ghost writer, when choosing a simile for the Christian Church, thinks of what to him was a traditional religious building—a temple front carried by twelve marble columns and surmounted by a pediment.⁴⁰ However, one wants to remember that neither to Constantine nor to anyone, whether pagan or Christian, in the early fourth century a church was a religious building of the same character as a temple. Churches rather fell into the class of basilicas and the reasons are twofold. They were meeting halls for the congregations (*basilicae ecclesiae*) or meeting halls for burial and funeral rites (*basilicae quae coemeteria*).⁴¹ But they were also audience halls of the Lord. The church on Golgotha, to the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, is “*basilica id est dominicum*”;⁴² and Eusebius, uses terms such as βασίλειος νεώς or βασίλειος οἴκος instead of βασιλική.⁴³ Similarly, dedicatory church inscriptions time and again employ the term *aula* with its aulic overtones.⁴⁴ The terminology not only conforms to the high-flown language of encomia and poetry; it also establishes the church as the throne room of the Emperor of Heaven, comparable to the sanctuary where the living god-emperor received the obeisance of his subjects.

Since churches were basilicas in function, they adopted also in lay-out and construction the basic elements of the type: a simple plan and timber-roof. These elements obviously coincided with Constantine's Church policy. Church building was a tool aimed at impressing on the Empire and its neighbors the power and splendor of the Christian God and His Church. Churches must be numerous, capable of holding large crowds, impressive through size, and lavishly appointed. Speed was essential; and vaulting, as in the *Basilica Nova*, was slow and costly and required skilled labor — a scarce commodity, as witness two decrees of Constantine exempting building workers from civic duties.⁴⁵ Basilica construction recommended itself, timber-roofed, thin-walled, and allowing for a plan easily expanded lengthwise and, through added aisles, crosswise. The savings in cost would be spent more profitably in terms of political propaganda on precious decorations and furnishings. Constantine's letter to Makarios of Jerusalem is explicit: he suggests for the church on Golgotha—and no bishop worth his pay would fail to understand the imperial command—the use of columns, of marble revetment, and of a coffered gilded ceiling. When Egeria saw the church fifty years later, she noted as Constantine's

⁴⁰ *Oratio ad sanctum coetum*, in Gelasius Cyzicenus, *Historia Concilii Nicaeni*, II, 7.1 ff. (Migne, PG, 85, col. 1232 ff.).

⁴¹ In Optatus Milevitanus, *loc. cit.*: ...*basilicam ecclesiae catholicae*, quam in Constantina civitate iusseram fabricari...; L.P., I, 202: ...*basilicae quem cymiterium constituit*....

⁴² *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, in *Itinera Hierosolymitana*, ed. P. Geyer, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 38 (Vienna, 1898), 23.

⁴³ L. Voelkl, “Die konstantinischen Kirchenbauten nach Eusebius,” *RACrist*, 29 (1953), 54 ff., 187 ff.; G. Downey, “Constantine's Churches at Antioch, Tyre and Jerusalem. Notes on Architectural Terms,” *Mél. Université Saint-Joseph*, 38 (1962), 192 ff.

⁴⁴ Frequently used through the fifth and sixth centuries; cf. Diehl, *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, nos. 1752, 1753, 1756, 1759, 1761.

⁴⁵ *Theodosiani Libri XVI*, ed. Th. Mommsen, I, 2 (Berlin, 1905), Lib. XIII, tit. IV, leges I, II, dated 334 and 337 respectively.

gifts also mosaic, eucharistic vessels of silver and gold, and silken textiles with gold borders.⁴⁶ Constantine's gifts to his church foundations in Rome and elsewhere convey the same picture of glitter: for the Lateran, the donation lists of the *Liber Pontificalis* enumerate silver altars or offering tables, light fixtures of silver hanging and standing in the nave and aisles, and hanging gold crowns; for St. Peter's, they list an altar of gilded silver set with precious stones, a huge cross of pure gold, large candlesticks of gilded bronze, and lighting fixtures of silver.⁴⁷

Basilicas, then, built under Constantine for Christian congregations fall in most respects into the same class as basilicas laid out for any other function with the support of the Emperor. They belong to the category of public monumental building: they are erected with the Emperor's financial and political support as part of a political program; they are viewed, like other basilicas, as meeting halls and audience halls; and they share essential features with these other basilicas such as size, simple construction, and lavish decoration. Yet, only exceptionally are basilica plans, as customary by 300, adopted *verbatim* by Constantinian church planners. Plain single-naved halls or halls with three naves of equal height make their appearance on a low social level of church building, such as S. Crisogono *trans Tiberim* in Rome, or in a distant province such as Istria. At the opposite end of the social scale, the single-naved, apsed hall with marble-sheathed walls, topped by painted plaster, and with large windows—customary by 310 in sumptuous public halls—is rarely, if ever, used by Constantinian church builders.⁴⁸ Only a variant occurs: in the Sessorian Palace in Rome a third-century hall was transformed into a church—S. Croce in Gerusalemme—by adding an apse to one of its short sides, subdividing it by two triple arches, and shifting its direction to the longitudinal axis.⁴⁹ As a rule, however, Christian basilicas under Constantine are set off as a distinct group from their non-Christian cousins; and they do have in common

⁴⁶ S. *Silviae peregrinatio*, in *Itinera Hierosolymitana* (as quoted *supra*, note 42), 76: ...*si vela vides, auroclava oliserica sunt.... Ministerium autem omne genus aureum gemmatum.... Quid autem dicam de ornatu fabricae ipsius quam Constantinus...hornavit auro, musivo et marmore pretioso....*

⁴⁷ L.P., I, 172f., 176f., and Eusebius, V. C., III, 45 and IV, 46 (Heikel, 96, 136). The authenticity of the lists incorporated in the *Liber Pontificalis* has been questioned; but by and large I consider them genuine: witness *inter alia*, the correspondence of the landholdings listed with the changing political situation (A. Piganiol, *L'empereur Constantin* [Paris, 1932], 112f.; H. v. Schoenebeck, *Beiträge zur Religionspolitik des Maxentius und Constantin*, Klio, Beiheft 43 [Wiesbaden, 1939; reprint, Aalen, 1962], 88ff.). The only item of dubious date listed in the *Liber Pontificalis* among Constantine's donations to the Lateran basilica is, in my opinion, the *fastigium*. Its figural decoration, statues of Christ *doctor mundi* and the twelve apostles facing the congregation, and Christ in majesty flanked by angels carrying spears, suggests at the present state of our knowledge a date after the middle of the century. Or could the beginnings of three-dimensional figural groups antedate their appearance in mosaic or painting?

⁴⁸ Reusch and Mylius, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 28), have suggested that the apsed hall at Metz was built as a church in the late fourth century, and Sedlmayr, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 2), 19f. and 51, lists as churches apsed halls of similar date excavated in Vienna (K. Oettinger, *Das Werden Wiens* [Vienna, 1951], 12ff.) and at Szombathely (Steinamanger) (*Acta Savariensis*, I [1943], 25ff.). In no case are reasons given for the original Christian character of the buildings, and I remain much in doubt.

⁴⁹ *Corpus Basilicarum*, I, 165ff., esp. 184ff.; Colini, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 28), 150. Contrary to my earlier dating of the remodeling of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, that is *ca.* 350 for the cross arches, *ca.* 400 for the apse, I would at present assign the entire remodeling to the last years of Helena, who died *ca.* 329–330.

a number of elements. But it is not before 350 that a standard type, though with regional differences, was developed for Christian church building. The Age of Constantine knows no such norm. Its churches, while playing on a common theme, vary widely in plan and design (fig. 8).⁵⁰ Nor am I convinced that stylistic concepts common either to all Constantinian architecture or to all Constantinian church building can be established at this point. At best, it seems possible to suggest that variants fall into groups determined to a large degree by external factors such as liturgy or workmanship. Perhaps—very tentatively—some major differences in style can be explained as regional traits or as characteristic for the early and late years of Constantine's reign.⁵¹

In Rome, the Lateran basilica had established a type: nave; semicircular apse; pairs of aisles on either side, different in height and length; and short projecting aisle—transepts (figs. 4, 8 A). St. Peter's on the Vatican is known, like the Lateran, only from old records and illustrations and from recent excavations.⁵² It has often been taken simply as a second edition of the Lateran; but this is doubtful. Begun more than a decade after the Lateran, probably after 324,⁵³ and serving as a pilgrims' church, burial place and funeral banquet hall,

⁵⁰ Krautheimer, *op. cit.*, 1965, 23 ff., 67 ff.; Ward Perkins, *op. cit.*, 1954, 85, takes a different view.

⁵¹ Attempts have been made time and again to establish a set of stylistic features proper to Christian building under Constantine as against older and contemporary non-Christian architecture. The clerestory with wide windows has been claimed as one of these features (Riegl, *op. cit.*, as *supra*, note 32); or else, the difference has been seen in the stress placed on the longitudinal axis of the Christian basilica (E. Kirschbaum, "Der Raumcharakter der altchristlichen Basilika," *RACrist.*, 13 [1936], 272 ff.; also Klauser, Gall and Deichmann at the Munich symposium, *Kunstchronik*, 4 [1951], 116 f.). Finally, there is the more recent thesis presented by Sedlmayr (*op. cit.*, as *supra*, note 2, *passim*): late antique architecture in general is characterized by well-lit rooms with large arched windows; by wall revetment and by the resulting "de-corporealization" of wall and space—elements all found in apsed, single-naved halls or in basilicas with large clerestory windows, whether resting on arcades supported by piers or on colonnades, trabeated or arched. These last two Sedlmayr considers as specifically Constantinian and Christian.

In my opinion all these theses suffer from severe shortcomings: they are based on material often poorly known and poorly dated; they select arbitrarily a number of buildings as typical; and they disregard social, functional, regional, and chronological differences between major groups of Christian basilicas.

⁵² *Esplorazioni sotto la Confessione di San Pietro...*, ed. B. M. Apollonj Ghetti, A. Ferrua, E. Josi, E. Kirschbaum (Vatican City, 1951); J. M. C. Toynbee and J. B. Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of Saint Peter* (London-New York, 1956); A. Frazer, *A Graphic Reconstruction of Old St. Peter's* (M.A. thesis, New York University, 1957; unpublished); Jongkees, *op. cit.* (as quoted *supra*, note 11).

⁵³ The year 333 has been suggested as the date for the beginning of construction at St. Peter's in a paper by W. Seston, by now well known ("Hypothèse sur la date de la basilique constantinienne de Saint-Pierre à Rome," *Cahiers Arch.*, 2 [1947], 153 ff.) and has been frequently accepted—for instance, by Kirschbaum, *op. cit.* (as *supra*, note 11), 152 f.; but I remain sceptical, as do Toynbee and Ward Perkins, *op. cit.*, 1954, 197, and Jongkees, *op. cit.*, 33 f. Seston's hypothesis was based on a decree of Constans, dated 349, which reinstated punishment for *violationes sepulcri* if committed after 333; from this Seston assumes that a (lost) decree of Constantine issued in 333 had lifted such punishment temporarily in connection with the beginning of work at St. Peter's and the impending demolition of the graveyard below. I think it far more likely that 333 marks the termination of work on the foundations in the graveyard area, that is, below the transept and the adjoining part of the nave. The start of building operations I would still link to the landholdings in the eastern provinces, contained in the donation list, and thus after 324 (Piganiol, *op. cit.*, 112 ff.); to the donation by Constantine and Helena of a huge golden cross, and thus prior to 329/330 (R. Egger, "Das Goldkreuz am Grabe Petri," *Österr. Akad. d. Wissenschaften, Phil.-histor. Klasse, Anzeiger*, 1959, no. 12 [Vienna, 1959], 182 ff., erroneously dates Helena's death 335–337); finally, to the completion of and the placing of mosaic inscriptions of Constantine on the apse arch and the triumphal arch, obviously prior to 337 (Toynbee and Ward Perkins, *op. cit.*, 200; Kirschbaum, *op. cit.*, 152 f.).

On the other hand, the church—and possibly even the transept—was apparently not yet in use in 354, since the feast of the Apostle was still celebrated in *catacumbis*, that is at S. Sebastiano on

its nave and double aisles clashed against the clumsy, tall transept-cum-apse designed to shelter the shrine of the Apostle.⁵⁴ In function, then, it differs from the cathedral at the Lateran where the congregation met for regular services on all feast days. The plan of St. Peter's (fig. 8 B) too differs from that of the Lateran. Not only is it provided with a transept, but the colonnades of nave and aisles correspond with one another in number and placing; both aisles are the same height; the windows of the inner aisle have slipped down, as it were, and have become open relieving arches over the separating aisle arcade. True, nave and aisles (and the atrium) probably date after Constantine's death, perhaps after the middle of the century—which might explain the hodgepodge of pilfered columns and entablatures; but the lay-out goes back to Constantine's late years, and the greater simplicity of its over-all design, in contrast to the earlier Lateran basilica, becomes evident. Other covered cemeteries in Rome, though of equally simple design, are U-shaped, the aisles linked by an ambulatory and the nave defined by piers and arcades at S. Sebastiano, by trabeated columns in the *basilica maior* at S. Lorenzo.⁵⁵ In Trier, the cathedral (fig. 8 C), begun presumably about 326, was again designed for regular services, like the one at the Lateran. But it was formed by two basilicas parallel to each other, each with atrium, nave, two aisles, and rectangular chancel lined with cubicles along its east side.⁵⁶ Paulinus' cathedral at Tyre is known only through Eusebius' dedication sermon, delivered in 316/317, and his description is far from clear. What is clear is that the church had a nave lit by clerestory windows, two aisles, an atrium, and, preceding this, a colonnaded *propylaeum*; but it remains in doubt what the *oikoi* and *exedrae* mentioned by Eusebius as being along its flank looked like; nor is it clear whether the entire complex was enclosed by a precinct wall.⁵⁷ Certainly Constantine's buildings on Golgotha, begun in 325/326—the Holy Sepulchre, Calvary, and the basilica—were enclosed in one precinct. It was approached

the Via Appia (Kirschbaum, *op. cit.*, 153). The nave in all likelihood was not yet far advanced; and the use in its colonnades of a hodgepodge of pilfered columns, bases, capitals, and entablatures would seem to suggest a time of construction when imperial supervision had become rather lax, possibly the years after 360.

⁵⁴ The use of nave and aisles for burials and funeral banquets is confirmed by the finds of numerous graves and Christian epitaphs during the demolition of these portions of the church (H. Lietzmann, *Petrus und Paulus in Rom* [Leipzig, 1927], 305 ff.) and by references to funeral meals in the nave and atrium, in 397, by Paulinus of Nola (*Ep.* XIII, 11 ff. [Migne, PL, 61, col. 213 ff.]) and by Augustine at roughly the same time (*Ep.* XXIX, 10 [Migne, PL, 33, col. 119]).

⁵⁵ R. Krautheimer, "Mensa-Coemeterium-Martyrium," *Cahiers Arch.*, 11 (1960), 15 ff.

⁵⁶ The most complete among the many preliminary reports on the excavations of the twin cathedral at Trier and its history remains still Th. K. Kempf, "Trierer Domgrabungen 1943–1954," *Neue Ausgrabungen in Deutschland*, ed. Römisch-Germanische Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Berlin, 1958), 368 ff.

⁵⁷ Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, X, iv, 2 ff., esp. 37 ff. and 63 ff. (ed. J. E. L. Oulton and H. J. Lawlor, 2 [Loeb Classical Library, 1932], 308 ff.). An attempt to visualize the exedras and *oikoi* mentioned has been made by D. I. Pallas, "Αἱ παρ' Εύσεβίῳ ἔξεδραι τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τῆς Παλαιστίνης," *Θεολογία*, 25 (1954), 470 ff. The date 316 or 317 for the consecration of the cathedral of Tyre has been proposed by E. Schwartz, *Kaiser Konstantin und die christliche Kirche* (Leipzig, 1913), and by G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire Ecclésiastique*, vol. 3, 81, note 1, and vol. 4, 130 (*Sources Chrétiennes*, 55 and 73 [Paris, 1958, 1960]), against the earlier date 314 or 315 as suggested by A. Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur*, 2 (Leipzig, 1904), 108.

from a colonnaded *propylaeum* at the east end, and this in turn led to an atrium fronting the basilica. The Sepulchre, on the other hand, rose near the opposite west end of the precinct, framed by either a rotunda or by a semicircular colonnade under the open sky.⁵⁸ While all these elements are attested to by both archaeological evidence and by Eusebius' and later descriptions, the basilica is known only through Eusebius' *ekphrasis*. Its nave was flanked by double aisles on either side and these were surmounted by galleries, supported on high columns; the walls of the aisles were sheathed with marble; the nave terminated in a structure covered by a *hemisphairion*, a half dome, and hence presumably a rotunda; and this rotunda inside was enveloped by twelve columns, which apparently projected from the walls and carried silver vessels.⁵⁹ The site suggests a plan not much longer than wide (figs. 8 D, 9). These are the very proportions of the other major sanctuary built by Constantine in the Holy Land, the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. Here too, the nave was short and flanked by double aisles on either side (fig. 8 E). Nothing so far indicates whether or not the aisles were surmounted by galleries; but the possibility deserves consideration. An octagon rose at the end of the nave and aisles, sheltering the Grotto of the Nativity, while a forecourt preceded them.⁶⁰ The Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, begun in Constantine's last years or early in Constantius' reign, was apparently similar in proportion, though much larger and provided with a nave, four aisles, and galleries.⁶¹ On a smaller

⁵⁸ The letter to Makarios is dated 325/326 through the reference it contains to the acting prefect Drakilianus (Eusebius, *V.C.*, III, 31 [Heikel, 92]), who was *vicarius orientis* in 326 (Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, 5 [Stuttgart, 1905], 1633).

The reconstruction of Constantine's buildings at the Holy Sepulchre is based in part on the archaeological remains, scanty and confined to the areas of the propylaeum and atrium at one end of the complex and of the Holy Sepulchre at the opposite end, and to a larger part on the literary sources, in the first place Eusebius, *V.C.*, III, 26ff. (Heikel, 89ff.). The most convincing interpretation of the literary material has been given by E. Wistrand, *Konstantins Kirche am Heiligen Grabe...nach den ältesten literarischen Zeugnissen*, Acta Universitatis Gotoburgensis, Göteborgs Högskolas Arsskrift, LVIII, 1952, 1 (Göteborg, 1952). The archaeological evidence, first established by H. Vincent and F.-M. Abel, *Jérusalem*, 2, 1: *Jérusalem Nouvelle* (Paris, 1914), has recently been supplemented by the investigations around the Sepulchre undertaken by V. Corbo ("Gli edifici della Santa Anastasis . . .," *Studii Biblici Franciscani Liber Annus*, 12 [1961/62], 221ff.; *idem*, "Nuove Scoperte archeologiche nella Basilica del S. Sepolcro," *ibid.*, 14 [1963/64], 293ff.). While still incomplete, his studies raise new questions regarding date and design of the colonnade and the rotunda at the Anastasis. In the present context they can be disregarded, since our knowledge of the basilica rests entirely on Eusebius' description and its interpretation.

⁵⁹ See, however, G. Downey, "On Some Post-Classical Greek Architectural Terms," *Transactions Amer. Philological Assoc.*, 77 (1946), 22ff., who interprets *hemisphairion* as the half dome of an apse.

⁶⁰ R. W. Hamilton, "Excavations in the Atrium of the Church of the Nativity," *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine*, 3 (1934), 1ff.; E. T. Richmond, "Basilica of the Nativity, Discovery of the Remains of an Earlier Church," *ibid.*, 5 (1935-1936), 75ff.; *idem*, "The Church of the Nativity, The Plan of the Constantian Church," *ibid.*, 6 (1936-1937), 63ff.; W. and J. H. Harvey, "Recent Discoveries at the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem," *Archaeologia*, 87 (1937), 7 ff.

When presenting a reconstruction of the church in Krautheimer, *op. cit.*, 1965, 37, fig. 15, I did not yet consider the possibility of its having had galleries.

⁶¹ The date of the beginning of work on the first Hagia Sophia has yet to be established. The church is first mentioned by Socrates (*Hist. eccles.*, II, 16) as being under construction under Constantius. It is not mentioned by Eusebius, who (*V.C.* [Heikel]) limits himself to general remarks regarding Constantine's activity in building churches in his new capital. This would seem to suggest that the Hagia Sophia was not yet under construction when Eusebius last visited Constantinople in 335. On the other hand, it is hardly conceivable that Constantine would not have thought of providing a cathedral for Constantinople, and I suspect, therefore, that the building was started between 335 and 337. Indeed, the *Easter Chronicle* states that Constantine had laid the foundations around 336.

scale and with but two aisles, the type seems to have survived in Constantinople and Salonica through the fifth century.

Features common to all high-class Constantinian church building—the lengthwise direction and the combination of nave and aisles—thus interlock with elements which vary from building to building: twin cathedrals; aisle-transepts; and, terminating the nave, transepts, octagons, or rotundas. The roots of both constant and variable elements are many and are determined more often than not by external factors. Liturgical custom, as established by Constantine's time, though with strong regional variations, generally demanded a longitudinal axis of congregation, altar, and clergy during services, a requirement which in Constantinian church planning coincided with the architectural tradition which by 300—at least in the West—viewed basilicas of any function or type as longitudinal, apsed structures. On the other hand, church basilicas could be single-naved only where the congregation was small. A large congregation would require a structure expanded sideways; and since roof construction limited the width of the nave, the extension by aisles was a natural solution. Where custom demanded a lengthwise division of the congregation (the men on one side, the women on the other), aisles would lend themselves to such segregation. The nave, given its distance from the outer windows of the aisles, would have to be lit by clerestory windows in basilicas without galleries.⁶² Similarly, external factors—liturgical or practical—exert their impact on the variable elements in Constantinian church building. Local building practices and natural resources dictate the choice of structural materials and the techniques of workmanship: concrete faced with brick or *opus listatum* at Rome; full brick at Trier; cut stone in the Holy Land and at Tyre. Comparably, the church plan appears to have been modified by local variations in liturgical custom: the site of the altar; the placing of the clergy seats; the seating of the congregation; the timing of the offerings by the congregation—before the service or between *missa catechumenorum* and *missa fidelium*; the placing of the offerings—outside the church, *on* the altar, or in separate rooms near the altar; the movements of the clergy—for the Readings,

Evidence, both documentary and archaeological, is but scanty (A. M. Schneider, "Die vorjustinianische Sophienkirche," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 36 [1936], 77 ff.; *idem*, *Die Grabung im Westhof der Sophienkirche*, Istanbuler Forschungen, 12, [Berlin, 1941]). Interpretation and dating of the elements excavated still awaits further study; see A. Keck, review of E. H. Swift, *Hagia Sophia*, in *Art Bulletin*, 23 (1941), 237 ff. With J. B. Ward Perkins (in D. Talbot Rice [ed.], *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors, Second Report* [Edinburgh, 1958], 64), I still think it possible that the rear wall of the early fifth-century *propylaeum*, that is, the front wall of the atrium, belongs to Constantine's original structure rather than to Theodosius II's rebuilding.

⁶² It has been claimed that clerestory windows were common in basilicas not destined for Christian use and at times antedating the fourth century, and reconstruction drawings frequently show rows of windows in the clerestory: Ladenburg (R. Schultze, *Basilika* [Berlin-Leipzig, 1928], 55 f.); Mithraeum, London (W. F. Grimes, in *Recent Archaeological Excavations*, ed. R. L. C. Bruce-Mitford [New York, 1957]); Pesch (see *supra*, note 24). However, such reconstruction is rarely supported by archaeological evidence. Where clerestory openings can be ascertained, e.g., in Vitruvius' basilica at Fano or in the Basilica Julia, they were low, small, and not to be compared with the huge windows common in Constantinian times. On this point, then, I agree with Sedlmayr, *op. cit.* (*supra*, note 2); however, I feel that practical solutions should be exhausted before interpreting the size of these windows and the abundance of light thus provided by reference to the *Sol invictus* (Sedlmayr) or to Christian stress on light and enlightenment (Riegl, *op. cit.*).

for the Sermon (where customary), for the celebration of the Eucharist; perhaps the placing of the catechumens—during their part of Mass and after dismissal.⁶³ All these elements must be considered in interpreting architectural variants such as twin cathedrals, atria, or rooms attached to the chancel area. Intertwined with such variations of local liturgical practice and church planning is the variety of church types assigned to different ecclesiastical functions in Constantinian times and slightly later: for the regular services of a resident congregation, single-naved halls without apses on a low social level, basilicas with nave and aisles in a higher stratum; for palace churches, huge apsed halls plentifully lit and sumptuously appointed, like S. Croce in Rome, or a central plan as in such structures as the Golden Octagon at Antioch;⁶⁴ for martyria, as a rule, large structures attached to the body of the basilica, whether the transept of St. Peter's or the octagon at Bethlehem; for covered cemeteries in Rome—a local phenomenon, it seems—U-shaped basilicas such as S. Sebastiano or S. Lorenzo. The hierarchy of these categories further causes such covered cemeteries usually to be less lavishly appointed than cathedrals, or for that matter, palace churches.

Alongside such primarily practical or functional factors, the social and economic standing of the patron and the prestige he was able and willing to confer on the structure were obviously determinant factors in influencing the design. The Emperor, at the pinnacle of the social scale, would, in buildings of his foundation, insist on the grandeur and splendor appropriate to his position and to state buildings of the highest class. I think it very possible that the doubling of the aisles at the Lateran, at St. Peter's, and on Golgotha, aside from functional considerations, reflects a desire to emulate the great secular basilicas built by past emperors in the capital—the Basilica Julia and the Ulpia. Certainly the glittering lavishness and the monumentality of high-class public architecture is what Constantine wanted to impart to church building. Monumentality in his eyes was guaranteed by the size of the structure and by the massiveness of the exterior: hence the emphasis placed in Eusebius' descriptions on the incredible height of Constantine's churches;⁶⁵ hence also the stress on the heavy stone construction "shining like marble" of the basilica on Golgotha.⁶⁶ Indeed, I think it very possible that also in brick construction,

⁶³ Research into the interplay of liturgy and church building has hardly been started, although particular facets of the question have been well dealt with: e.g., J. Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens de Syrie* (Paris, 1947), *passim*; *Kunstchronik*, 4 (1951) (*supra*, note 14), 118f.; G. Bandmann, "Über Pastophorien und verwandte Nebenräume," *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien für Hans Kauffmann* (Berlin, 1957), 19ff.; T. F. Mathews, "An Early Roman Chancel Arrangement and Its Liturgical Functions," *RACrist*, 38 (1962), 73ff.; H. Selhorst, *Die Platzanordnung im Gläubigenraum der altchristlichen Kirche* (Münster, 1931).

⁶⁴ For S. Croce, see *supra*, note 50. For Antioch, see G. Downey, *A History of Antioch* (Princeton, 1961), 342ff.; A. Birnbaum, "Die Oktogone von Antiochia, Nazianz und Nyssa," *Reptorium f. Kunsthissenschaft*, 36 (1913), 181ff.: and, more recently, W. Dynes, "The First Christian Palace-Church Type," *Marsyas*, 11 (1962/64), 1ff. Begun in 327, the structure must have been well advanced by the time Eusebius described it (*V.C.*, III, 50 [Heikel, 98f.]) in 337 or slightly after, and was completed in 341 (Downey, *loc. cit.*).

⁶⁵ Eusebius, *V.C.*, II, 46, regarding churches in general; III, 50, referring to Antioch; IV, 58, referring to the Apostles Church at Constantinople (Heikel, 20, 98f., 141).

⁶⁶ Eusebius, *V.C.*, III, 36 (Heikel, 94).

customary in Rome, the exterior was covered with stucco imitating stone construction, as had been the case in Diocletian's *Curia Senatus*.⁶⁷ In the interiors, the impression is dominated by the glittering lavishness of materials and appointments: hence, the carved and gilded cofferrings in the basilica on Golgotha and in the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople;⁶⁸ hence, the marble revetment of the walls and the marble columns; hence, the gilded bronze tiles on the roof "shining afar";⁶⁹ hence, the furnishings in silver, gold, and gilded bronze listed among Constantine's donations to Roman churches. This somewhat garish abundance of shimmering and expensive materials had evolved from the tradition of luxurious design in Roman mansions.⁷⁰ From there it had penetrated palace and public building; and thus it became—beginning with, though not necessarily through Constantine—the aim of high-class church building throughout the fourth and into the fifth century. Prudentius revels in describing gilded coffered ceilings, marble columns, multi-colored mosaic, and the light reflected by all this glitter; and Jerome, in his more ascetic mood, attacks the profusion in churches of marble, gilded ceilings, and altars or altar vessels studded with jewels.⁷¹ Where economy forbade such luxury, a substitute took its place: at S. Sebastiano, on the piers of the ambulatory, the fragment of a painted imitation of marble revetment has survived,⁷² as in so many middle-class houses from the first century B.C. through the fourth century A.D. But the intention of lavishness remains.

To go beyond the impact of these varying external factors on Constantinian church planning leads onto slippery ground. Architecture, for obvious reasons, presents a picture less clear than the figurative arts: the monuments are few; they are preserved only in fragments and usually only in their foundation walls; or else, they are known through *ekphraseis* that require interpretation; finally, buildings more often than other works of art depend on local conditions and other external factors, the materials available, the liturgy prevailing, the terrain. Stylistic concepts, thus, are hard to grasp. But two groups seem to stand out in Constantinian church building: one centered on the churches built under Constantine's aegis in his late years in Jerusalem and Constantinople; the other was concentrated predominantly in Rome and extended, though with variations, throughout the twenty-four years of Con-

⁶⁷ A. Bartoli, *Curia Senatus* (Rome, 1963), 47f., pls. VII, IX. Stone imitation in stucco was common in Rome through the third and into the fourth century: witness the great palace hall of the Sessorium and the Basilica Nova of Maxentius (Colini, *op. cit.* [as *supra*, note 28], 159).

⁶⁸ Eusebius, *V.C.*, III, 32, 36; IV, 58 (Heikel, 92f., 94, 141).

⁶⁹ The gilded roof tiles at Antioch are referred to by John Chrysostomus (Migne, PG, 51, col. 175) and Jerome, *Chronicle, ad ann. 327*, both quoted by Downey, *op. cit.*, 344, notes 112, 115. The gilding obviously would date a few years after Constantine's death, since the church was completed only in 341. Certainly of post-Constantinian date was the gilded roof of St. Peter's in Rome (Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, XII, vs. 31, ed. Thomson [as *supra*, note 10], 324).

⁷⁰ H. Drerup, *Über den Ausstattungsluxus in der römischen Architektur*, Orbis Antiquus, 12 (Münster, 1957), *passim*.

⁷¹ Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, XI, vs. 215 ff.: XII, vss. 31-42, 49-54, ed. Thomson (as *supra*, note 10), 318ff., 324ff.; Jerome, *Ep.* 52 (*Selected Letters of St. Jerome*, ed. F. A. Wright [Loeb Classical Library, 1954], 214; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 32, 13 (ed. Goldschmidt [as *supra*, note 10], 40 ff.)).

⁷² Günter, *op. cit.* (as *supra*, note 32), 1, 71, note 3, was the first to point out the fragment of marble imitation on a pier in the ambulatory of S. Sebastiano. A similar marble imitation existed in the north hall of the twin cathedral at Aquileia (*ibid.*).

stantine's reign. The contrast, at first glance, appears to be the familiar one of East against West. But on closer view, it turns out rather to spring from different concepts prevailing among church leaders and at Constantine's court during the first and the second half of his reign.

The churches built or begun during the last twelve years of Constantine's life—the basilica on Golgotha, the Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, and the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem—were, one recalls (including perhaps the last-named) basilicas with galleries (fig. 9). They were obviously variants on two-storied basilicas of pre-Constantinian times, the changes having been required by liturgical practice. It must be noted, however, that basilicas with galleries, wide-spread among forum basilicas and occasionally among other groups of basilicas as well, by A.D. 300 had become obsolete. They survived only in out-of-the-way pockets; one such pocket was the group of synagogues in Galilee.⁷³ Thus the architects who designed the basilica at Jerusalem with galleries may have done so simply because a local model was at hand. This is possible; but a basilica erected under the Emperor's personal and direct sponsorship is likely to have had origins more august than a few small provincial synagogues. After all, the most greatly admired imperial forum basilicas, the *Julia* and the *Ulpia* in Rome, the *Severiana* in Lepcis Magna, were provided with galleries, and it seems not too far-fetched to suggest that Constantine's architects in Jerusalem turned to such models with their imperial connotations in laying out a basilica erected under imperial auspices and designed to serve as a throne room for the Emperor of Heaven. Indeed, the reversion to an impressive, if obsolete, model may well parallel the prevalence in Constantine's administration of a retrospective trend in the last years of his life. There is one more alternative: the basilica on Golgotha might have drawn on palace basilicas provided with aisles and galleries. In a way, this would be the most attractive explanation. But, unfortunately, no palace basilicas of this type are known, except perhaps the one of Theodosius, represented in the mosaic at S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna; and this basilica, given its late date, might have been influenced in its design by churches with galleries.⁷⁴ Whatever its source, however, the stylistic features of the basilica on Golgotha can be envisaged but vaguely from Eusebius' description. As in earlier basilicas of second- and third-century date, the picture must have been determined by the superimposed orders—or the one colossal order—of columns flanking the nave. Marble revetment was necessarily confined to the walls of the aisles, thus forming a mere backdrop for the colonnades of the nave. A mosaic decoration

⁷³ See *supra*, note 24.

⁷⁴ E. Dyggve, *Ravennatum Palatum Sacrum* (Copenhagen, 1941), 54, interpreted the building represented on the mosaic as a "basilica discoperta" and linked it to the layout of the audience hall in Constantius' palace in his new capital, the *Magnaura*. This was destroyed in 532 and nothing is known of its plan or elevation. On the other hand, Theodosius' building shown at S. Apollinare Nuovo was certainly a covered basilica, and it is possible that it reflects an audience hall once existing at Constantinople. But it remains in doubt whether it was or was not provided with galleries, the former position being taken by P. Lampl, "Schemes of Architectural Representation in Early Mediaeval Art," *Marsyas*, 9 (1960-1961), 6 ff., esp. 12; the latter by N. Duval, "La représentation du Palais d'après le psautier d'Utrecht," *Cahiers Arch.*, 15 (1965), 207 ff., in particular 253.

could have been placed only in the short and dark top zone of the nave and on the dome of the *hemisphairion*.⁷⁵ From Jerusalem this church type, a basilica with galleries, seems to have been brought to Constantinople in the thirties, and there it takes solid roots. Represented first by Constantine's and Constantius' Hagia Sophia, it is reflected to perfection as late as 463 by the Church of St. John in the Studion convent (fig. 10): the exterior is bulky; the interior is short and squat with the nave only slightly higher than the galleries and articulated vertically by superimposed colonnades; the marble revetment on the aisle walls acted as a backdrop; and the entire design stresses the structural elements, columns and trabeations and their articulating function.

In contrast, the Lateran cathedral represents a much simpler and a far less conservative variant on the general theme than the basilica version with galleries. To be sure, secular basilicas with low aisles and large clerestory windows had existed in the West—witness the thermae hall of S. Pudenziana, about A.D. 160;⁷⁶ but they were rare, and the adoption of the type at the Lateran must be viewed as a new departure. Developed in the early years of Constantine's reign, the design and its execution were apparently the work of an architect well versed in the building techniques of Rome and rooted in architectural concepts prevailing by 300 in the West. It may have stemmed from many factors: the practical need to expand the structure sideways for a large congregation; the wish to provide plentiful light in the nave; the precedent set in the West by single-naved throne rooms filled with light and offering wall space for marble revetment and aniconic decoration in mosaic or painted plaster. The concepts of order and correspondence and the articulating function of colonnades and entablatures count little. In the Lateran, nave and aisle colonnades differed in number, proportion, materials, and position. The design of the interior was determined instead by the large surfaces of the nave walls. Their handling in Constantinian times remains conjectural; but the few traces preserved in the aisles at the Lateran and at S. Sebastiano strongly hint at the possibility of their having been designed for marble revetment, whether genuine or imitation.

The basilica composed of a high nave and low aisles appears to be, then, an early Constantinian type evolved in the West and specifically in Rome. In contrast to the revival of second-century models in the late Constantinian churches at Jerusalem and presumably at Constantinople, the Roman type seems to be developed freely as part of the regeneration of the *genus* basilica which takes place about 300 primarily in the West of the Empire. Once evolved at the Lateran in 313, the new plan with its tall, well-lit nave and its low, dimmer aisles rapidly became common property both in the West and in the East; but I doubt that it was spread, as has been suggested, by imperial fiat or, conversely, that it was invented simultaneously more than once. A few years later, the wealthy and ambitious bishop of Tyre would have had information about the great cathedral under construction in the capital of the

⁷⁵ See *supra*, note 45.

⁷⁶ *Corpus Basilicarum*, 3, 288 ff.

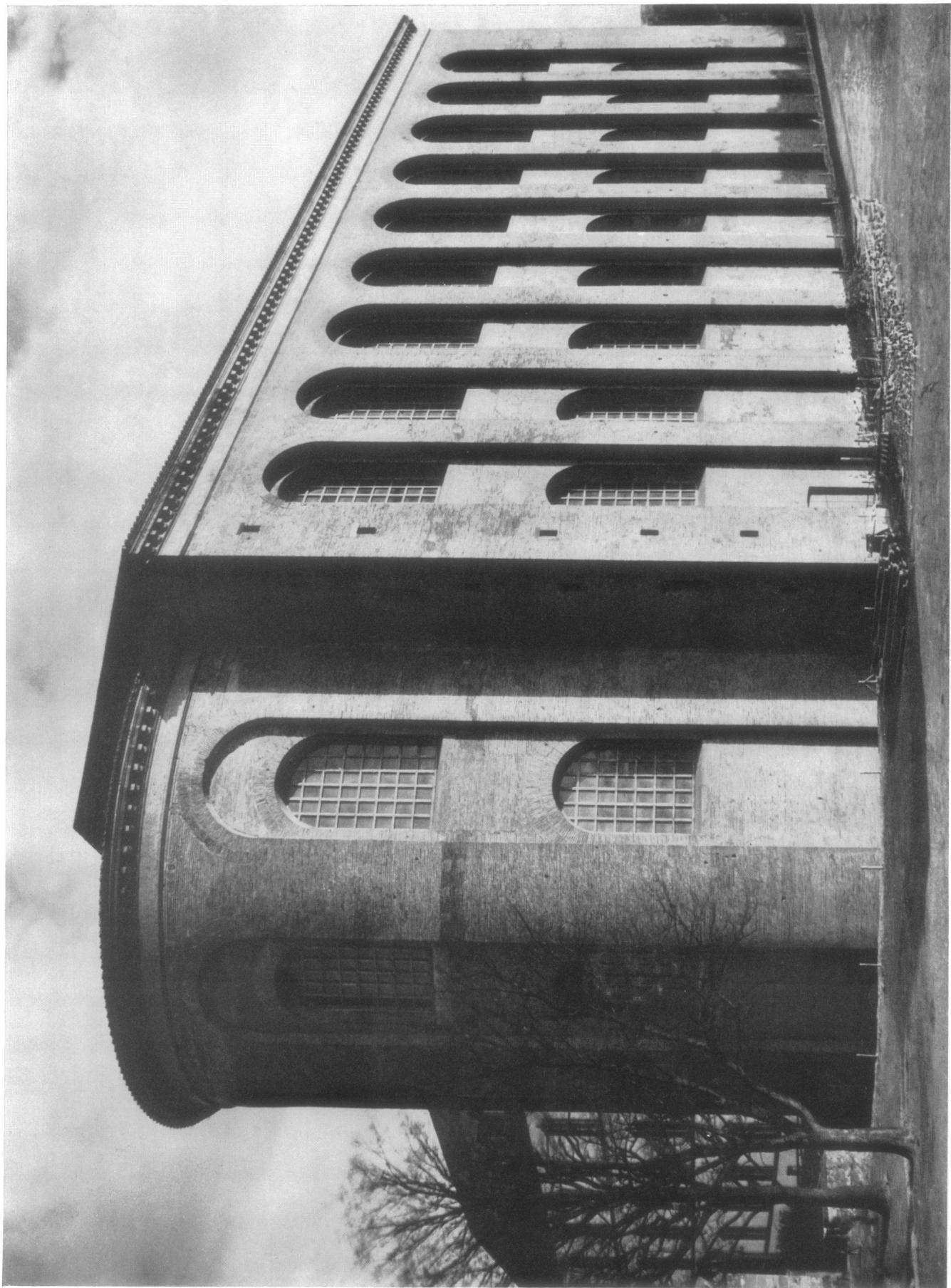
Empire under the auspices of the Christian Emperor of the West. Its plan could be easily adapted to local needs and where less space was required, as at Tyre, a formula with but two aisles became the rule, approaching the standard basilica types which prevail all over the Christian world beginning with the second half of the fourth century. In Constantine's days, the new simplified designs still vary widely; and it may be important that this inventiveness in the West is focussed entirely on basilica plans. In the East, on the contrary, the basilica type occupies church planners to but a minor degree; rather, Eastern planners in Constantine's late years appear to concentrate their inventiveness on church designs other than basilicas—octagonal palace churches like the one at Antioch, or martyria such as Constantine's own martyrium, the cross-shaped Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

The wide variety in Constantinian church building finds its explanation in large part in the administrative procedure adopted by Constantine in his church foundations. Again, it is his letter to Makarios which sets forth the procedure. The Emperor, fictitiously at least, takes the initiative in building the church. The Bishop is ordered to prepare an estimate of the materials and labor required, both skilled and unskilled. Based on this estimate, the local authorities are to provide the materials and workmen, locally available, while materials and labor not so available and extraordinary expenses will be procured by the imperial chancellery. In specifying such precious materials, Constantine obviously follows his policy of ranking church buildings among the highest class of public architecture. But it is the Bishop who determines quantity and quality of the materials to be gathered and the number and type of workmen needed. In this respect, he acts as the Emperor's delegate for the construction; Constantine was following a practice established since at least the second century in appointing a local dignitary to prepare and supervise the construction of public buildings. On the other hand, as the representative of the local church, the Bishop necessarily would lay down other essential requirements to be met by the building; after all, only the ecclesiastical authorities on the spot knew the terrain, the size of the congregation, the number of pilgrims to be expected, and the liturgical requirements locally prevailing. However, no bishop could have prepared without expert help the technical specifications such as type and amount of materials or of workmen; nor could he draw up final plans or supervise construction. For these tasks an architect was needed, either a local one or possibly one dispatched by the Emperor, as had been done occasionally in times past. In building the church on Golgotha, two men were involved: Zenobius, from his name a Syrian or Palestinian, and specifically referred to as an architect; and the presbyter Eustathios from Constantinople, possibly an architect or else a representative of the imperial treasury or chancellery, in charge of financing or providing materials.⁷⁷ The building then rises in an interplay of forces, some constant

⁷⁷ Theophanes, *Chronographia* (ed. C. De Boor [Leipzig, 1883], 33), *ad. ann. 5828* = A.D. 328, the most complete source, mentions both "the presbyter Eustathios from Constantinople and Zenobius, the architect who on Constantine's order built (this in the singular!) the martyrium of Jerusalem." Jerome (*Eusebii Pamphili Chronicus Latine evertit... Hieronymus*, ed. J. K. Fotheringham

throughout the Empire, others variable locally or regionally: the Emperor's insistence on monumental public structures, resplendent in precious materials; the local requirements as set forth in secular building by the governor or his delegate, in church building by the bishop; the materials locally available or procurable from abroad; the background of the architect, whether local or brought in from the outside; his acquaintance directly or by hearsay with the building type, secular or ecclesiastical, in examples previously erected; finally, Constantine's building policy, insisting on the position of churches at the very top of public monumental architecture, developed from the framework of the traditional *genus basilica*: a policy which tallies with his general aims of achieving revolutionary ends without disturbing the traditional framework demanded by a mass culture. Within these limitations, Constantine's architects designed his churches—basilicas adapted to local conditions and demands, yet expressive of the grandeur of the imperial founder and of the triumph of the religion he had taken under his protection.

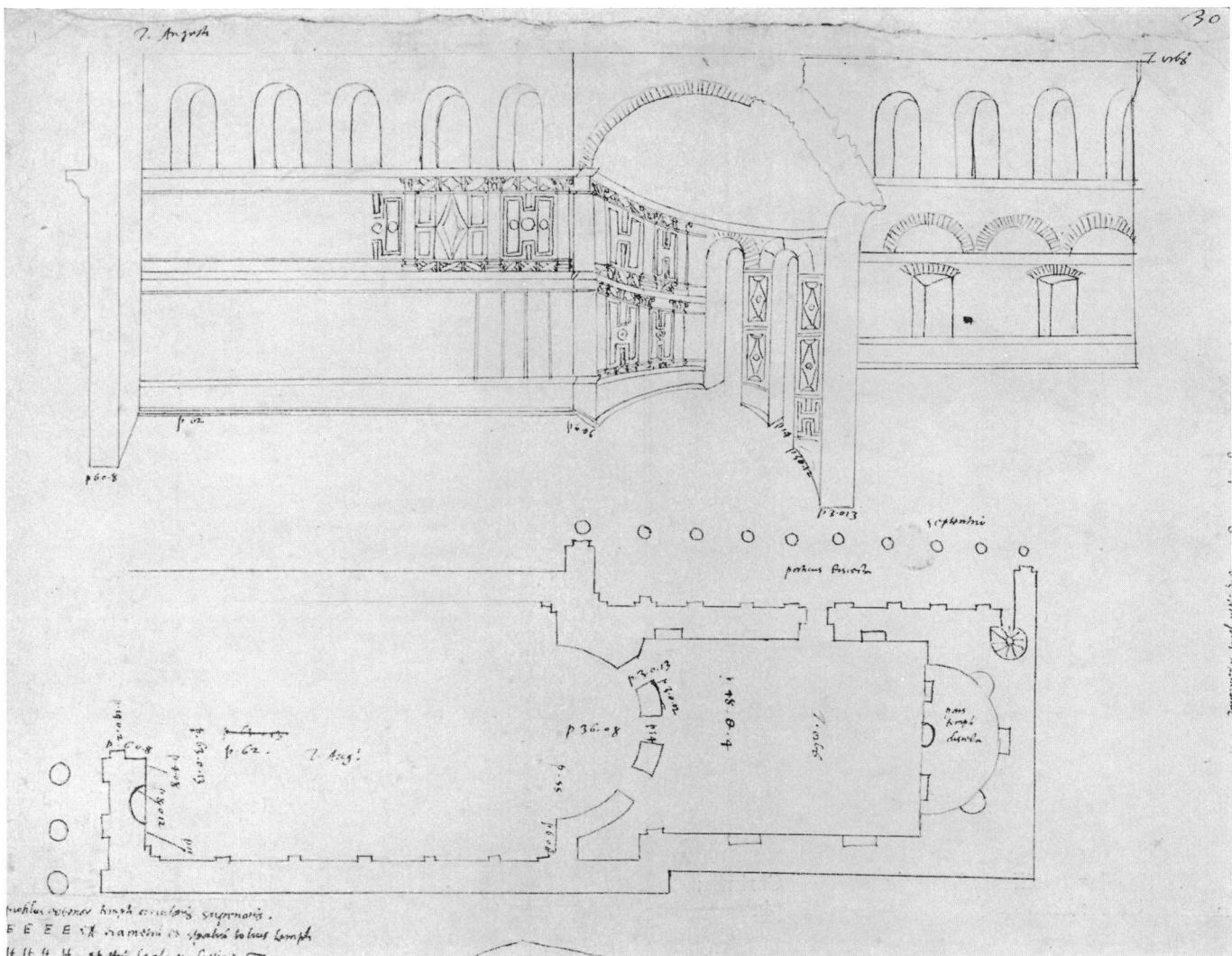
[London, 1923], 315f.) and, apparently following him, Prosper of Aquitaine (Migne, PL, 51, col. 576) in their chronicles, the first under the year 340, the latter under A.D. 336, speak only of "Eustathios (or Eustachius) the presbyter from Constantinople through whose zeal the martyrium in Jerusalem was built." The question is, then, whether Theophanes elaborated on a simple original statement like the one found in Jerome; or whether, as I think likely, he copied in its entirety a more complete early source, while Prosper and Jerome dropped from this or a similar early source the name of Zenobius, thus turning Eustathios instead of Zenobius into an architect. W. Telfer, "Constantine's Holy Land Plan," *Studia Patristica*, 1 = *Texte und Untersuchungen*, 63 (Berlin, 1957), 696ff., presents Eustathios as Constantine's liaison officer in Jerusalem, but beyond that considers both Eustathios and Zenobius as "members of the imperial staff that was bringing Constantinople into being."



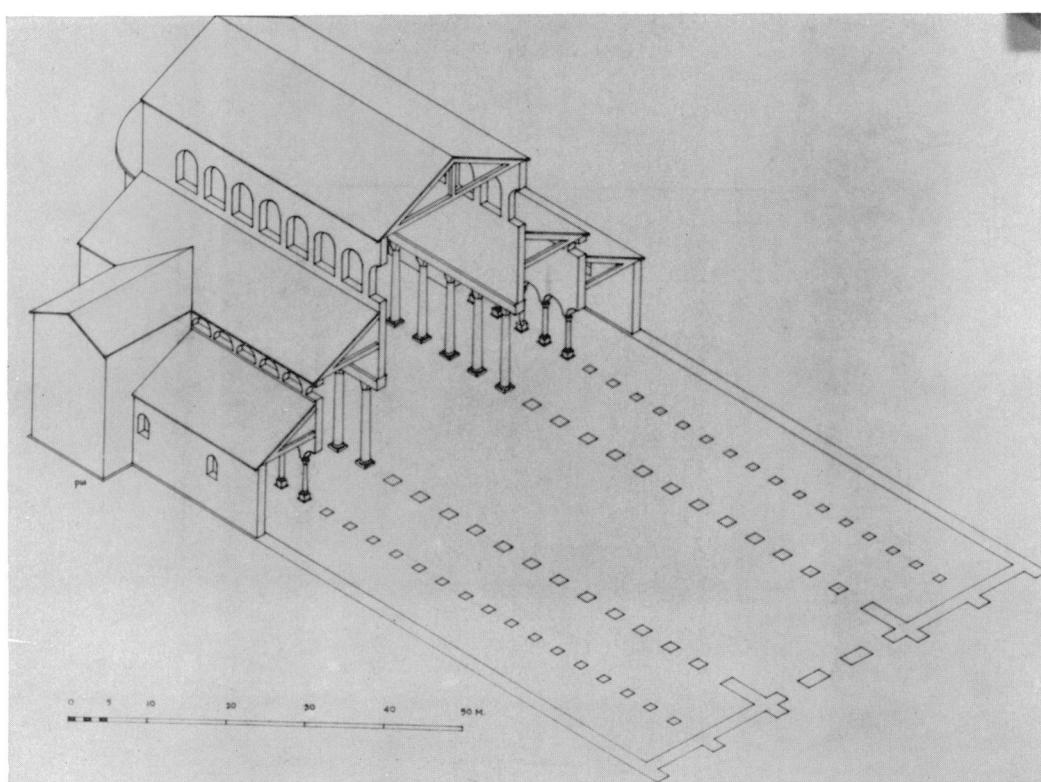
1. Trier, Basilica, Exterior



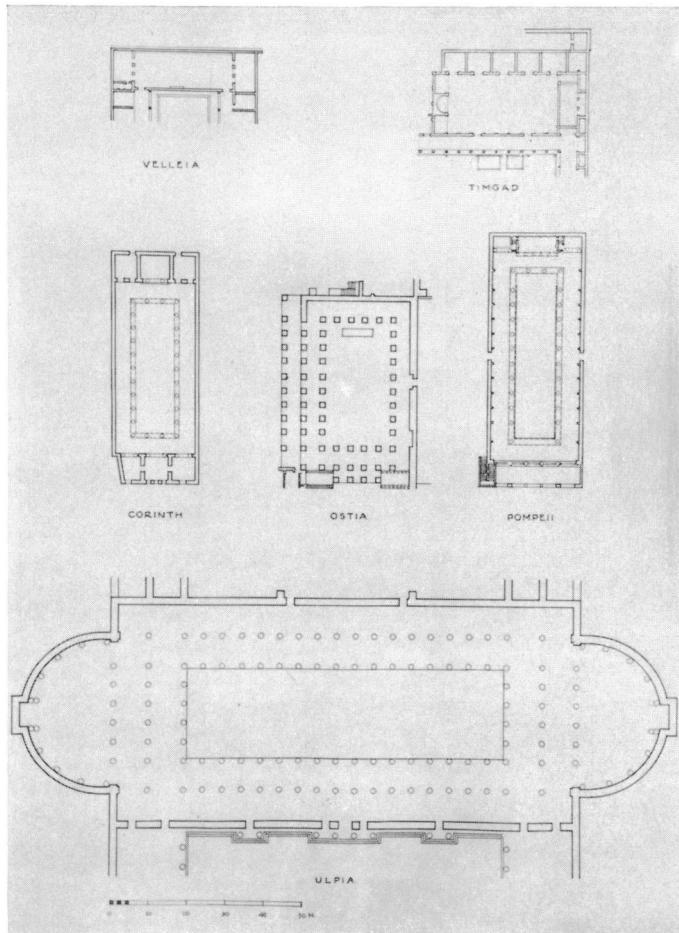
2. Trier, Basilica, Interior



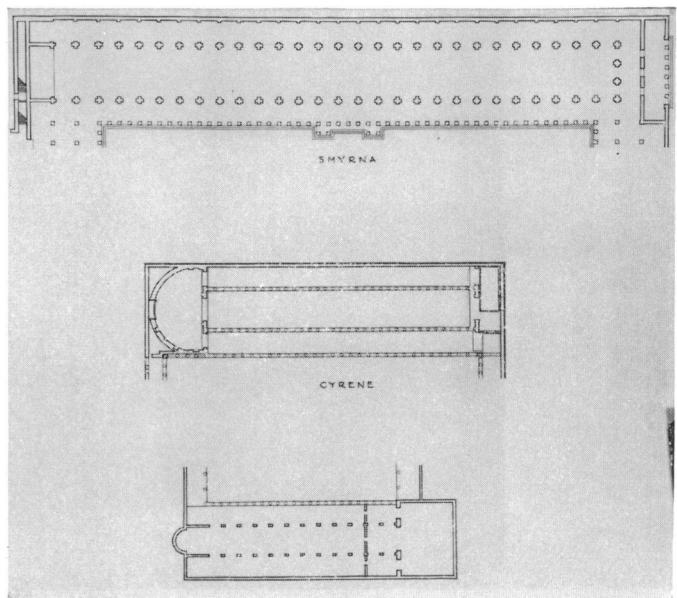
3. Rome, SS. Cosma e Damiano. Plan and Section



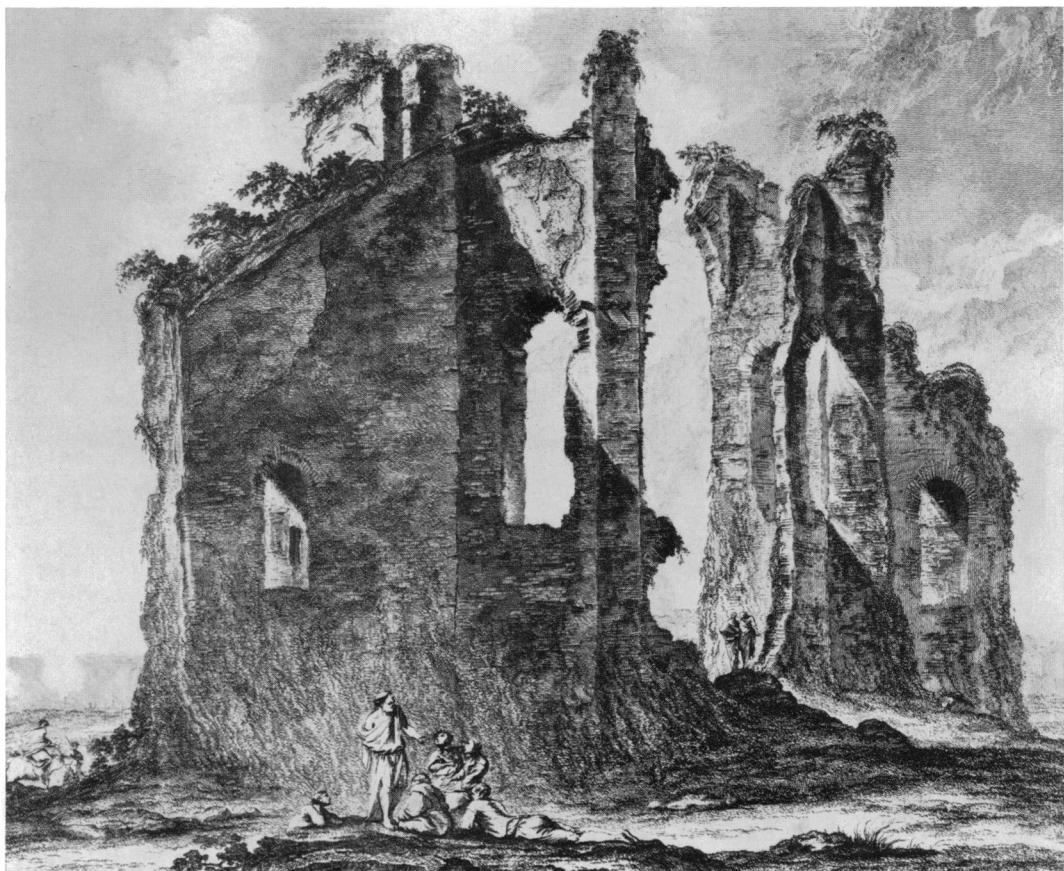
4. Rome, S. Giovanni in Laterano. Reconstruction



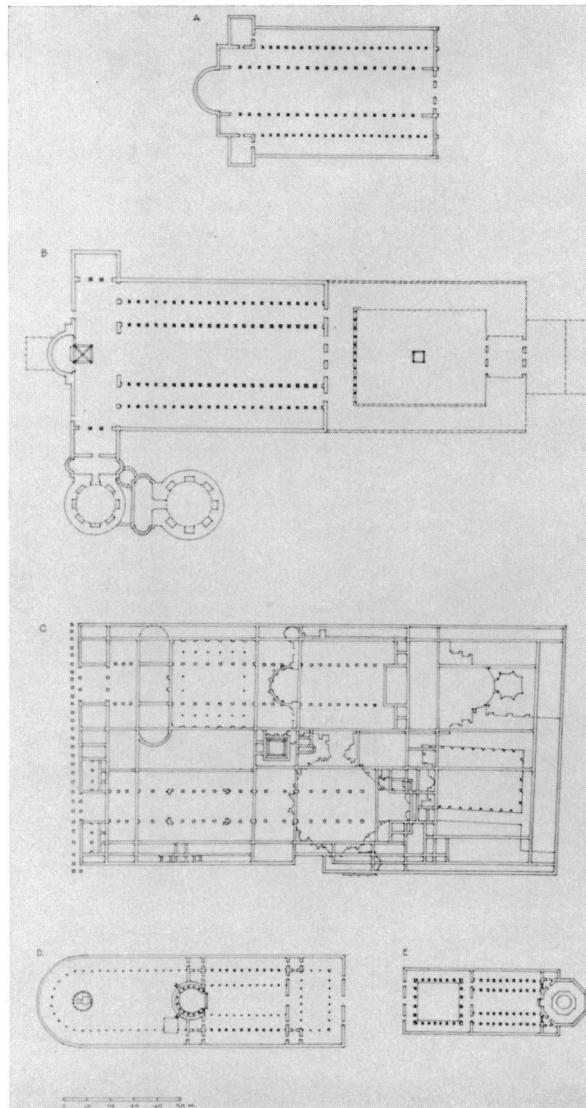
5. Secular Basilicas: Velleia; Timgad; Corinth; Ostia; Pompeii; Rome, Basilica Ulpia



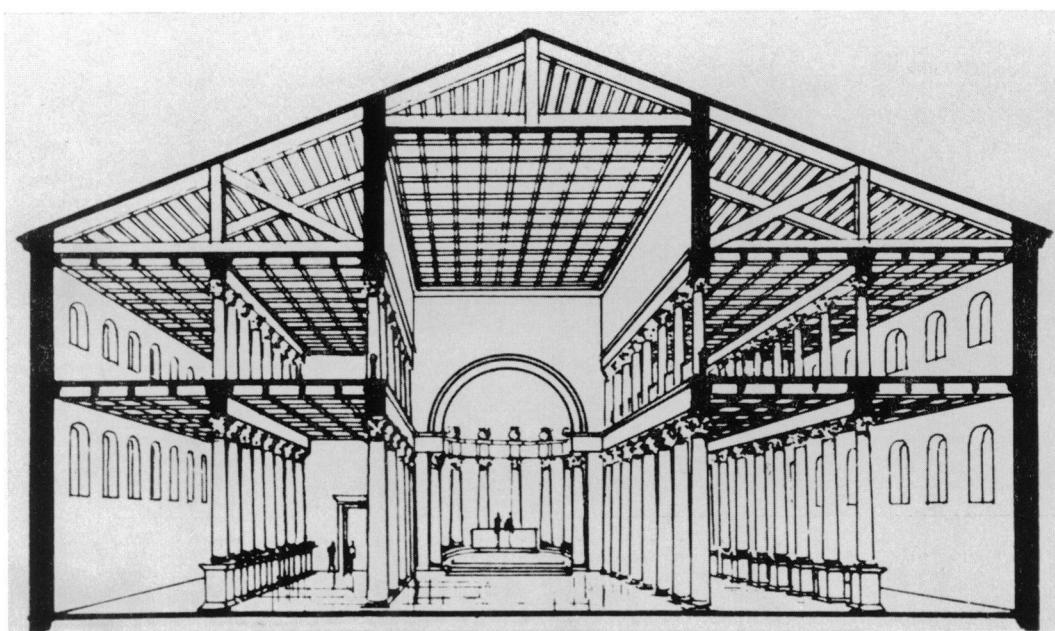
6. Secular Basilicas: Smyrna; Cyrene; Cremona



7. Rome, Sessorium Palace, "Templum Veneris et Cupidinis"



8. Christian Basilicas: (A) Rome, S. Giovanni in Laterano; (B) Rome, St. Peter's; (C) Trier, Twin cathedral; (D) Jerusalem, Church of the Holy Sepulchre; (E) Bethlehem, Church of the Nativity



9. Jerusalem, Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Reconstruction



10. Istanbul, St. John in the Studion. Nave